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Iqaluit

Speaker: The Honourable Paul Quassa, MLA

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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Development and Transportation*

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(Amittuq)

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(Tununiq)

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Energy Corporation*

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(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

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Hon. George Hickey
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responsible for the Status of Women*

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Iqaluit, Nunavut**Wednesday, November 4, 2020****Members Present:**

Hon. David Akeeagok, Mr. Tony Akoak, Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak, Hon. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasié, Mr. Joëlie Kaernerck, Mr. Pauloosie Keyootak, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr. John Main, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Mr. Calvin Pedersen, Mr. David Qamaniq, Mr. Emiliano Qirngnuq, Hon. Paul Quassa, Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Hon. Joe Savikataaq, Mr. Craig Simailak.

>>*House commenced at 13:30*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Paul Quassa) (interpretation): Good day. We will begin with a prayer. Let us pray.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good day. It's now Wednesday. Your Members of the Legislative Assembly will now reconvene today. Please feel welcome, those who are following the proceedings.

Let's proceed. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Justice, Minister Ehaloak.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements**Minister's Statement 516 – 5(2):
Policing in Nunavut**

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Good afternoon, colleagues...(inaudible)...

Speaker (interpretation): I think it is okay now.

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak: Good afternoon. Let's try that again.

Mr. Speaker, over the summer, serious concerns regarding law enforcement were raised across the country. Our territory is no exception. We have heard from many Nunavummiut that they expect police in Nunavut to be more transparent, accountable, and responsive to the communities that they serve.

I myself have spoken about my concern about systemic racism and the need for more dialogue and understanding between police and Inuit.

I do not take these concerns lightly and the Department of Justice is taking decisive actions to address these concerns. We are working with the "V" Division of the RCMP as well as our federal partners to improve relations with Nunavummiut and to increase accountability for the actions of police officers.

Implementing body cameras in Nunavut is one initiative that our government supports. While larger efforts are being established by RCMP headquarters, in the short term "V" Division has secured cameras for a pilot project. Body-worn cameras will be deployed in Iqaluit and will help inform the broader Canada-wide initiative to equip frontline RCMP officers with body-worn cameras. Before these cameras are deployed, consultations are being planned by the RCMP with community members, stakeholders, and government officials.

A priority for the department is to have more involvement and direction from Inuit and other community members on the direction of the RCMP. We want to

include Nunavummiut in the setting of law enforcement priorities in our territory. Our government is moving forward to create a Nunavut Police Council. This council will have representation from across Nunavut and will meet to talk about policing and set priorities that will form part of the *Shared Directional Statement between the Government of Nunavut and the RCMP*.

I will be introducing legislation that aims to amend the *RCMP Agreement Act*. In addition to renaming the Act “the *Police Act*,” the proposed amendments would allow the department to partner with civilian organizations for oversight of serious incidents involving the RCMP. The proposed amendments also incorporate our need to ensure culturally appropriate responses to serious incident investigations and consider the specific needs of Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers’ Statements. Acting Minister of Family Services, Minister Akeeagok.

**Minister’s Statement 517 – 5(2):
Family Services Financial Literacy
Project**

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to inform my colleagues about a project that encourages improved financial literacy through skills training.

The Department of Family Services has partnered with the Aqqiumavvik Society to develop financial literacy tools that are built on Inuit societal values.

Financial literacy is the ability to understand and effectively use various financial skills, including personal financial management and budgeting. It is a key life skill in reducing poverty and improving food security. Supporting Nunavummiut in strengthening these skills is central to the goals of Family Services’ programs.

The educational materials produced as part of this project include an interactive online series, take-home pamphlets, and wall posters.

Mr. Speaker, this project is in line with our mandate in this government as we work towards the well-being and self-reliance of Nunavummiut through *Inuusivut*, by building the capacity to make informed and wise financial decisions that will strengthen their lives.

I encourage my colleagues to have a look at these tools that are available through the offices of Family Services, the Aqqiumavvik Society, and will be shared with partners across Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers’ Statements. Minister of Education, Minister Joanasie.

**Minister’s Statement 518 – 5(2): 2020
Take Our Kids to Work Day**

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

Mr. Speaker, schools across Canada celebrate Career Month every November. This is a time to recognize

our diverse workforce, acknowledge the meaningful work done by Canadians, and inspire the next generation of hard-working professionals.

Mr. Speaker, the future success of our workforce is directly impacted by the success of our students today. One way my department is ensuring our students have every opportunity to attain this success is by participating in Take Our Kids to Work Day.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, on November 4 grade 9 students have the opportunity to experience the working world first-hand. This day encourages students to see their education beyond their classrooms and shows them the many opportunities available to them after graduating high school.

Mr. Speaker, this year I want to encourage all Nunavut workplaces, including my own department, to virtually participate in Take Our Kids to Work Day. While this year's events may look different than those of the past, my department will be sharing online resources and activities for students, educators, and workplaces to ensure the day is beneficial for all participants. This is a unique and exciting opportunity for students in Nunavut to connect with other students and workplaces across Canada.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, we should all be encouraged by the eagerness of students, parents, and workplaces to continue nurturing the connection between education and career development. I am confident that events like Take Our Kids to Work Day will prepare our students with skills they will use throughout their long and successful

careers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Human Resources, Minister Kusugak.

**Minister's Statement 519 – 5(2):
Respectful and Harassment-free
Workplace**

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Good day, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The Government of Nunavut (GN) heard our employees who brought forward their concerns of sexual harassment within the workplace and while on duty travel. The GN responded immediately with the establishment of an employee working group consisting of female GN employees in various occupations from across multiple departments.

In partnership with this working group, my department conducted a review of our respectful workplace and harassment policies, directives and processes, including jurisdictional reviews, and integrating findings with the valuable input of this working group.

Mr. Speaker, the GN is committed to the Inuit societal value of *Inuuqatigiitsiarniq*, respecting others, relationships and caring for people. Harassment in any form is unacceptable behaviour and is not tolerated by our government. The recently rewritten Human Resource Manual Directive 1010: Respectful and Harassment Free Workplace is now based on the principles of the following:

Minister's Statement 520 – 5(2): The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign runs from November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, to December 10, Human Rights Day.

The 16 Days of Activism also include the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 6. This day marks the anniversary of the murders in 1989 of 14 young women at l'École Polytechnique de Montréal.

December 6 also gives us an opportunity to honour the women and girls we have lost to violence in Nunavut. This is an opportunity as a territory and within our communities to honour our murdered and missing women.

This year the Nunavut Status of Women Council would like to encourage all communities to mark this day by engaging in actions that eliminate family violence. I encourage all Nunavummiut to honour this day in the company of the women and girls you love.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister responsible for the Status of Women, I call on all Nunavummiut to take action to end violence against women. We all have a role to play. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of

Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Akeegok.

Minister's Statement 521 – 5(2): Small Business Support Program Delivery

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On September 25 I updated this House on Small Business Support Program funding my department is providing to assist businesses with up to \$5,000 in short-term working capital during these challenging times.

In the short period of time since my last statement, applications have climbed from 95 to 121 and approved applications grew to total \$308,488. I want to thank my colleagues and the listening public for referring Nunavut's small business to my department.

Mr. Speaker, this program continues to provide Nunavut businesses that have been adversely affected by COVID-19 with much-needed support. I am pleased to announce that applications under this program will continue to be accepted throughout the fiscal year.

In addition to relief funding, my officials continue to support small business in access other programing and supports both inside and outside of the Government of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. I have no more names on my list. Continuing on. Members' Statements. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, followed by

the Member for Amittuq. Member Main.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 760 – 5(2): Love and Respect for Our Elders

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues and my constituents in Arviat and Whale Cove.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in my role as the Chairperson of the Regular Members' Caucus, as I wish to announce that today many members will focus on querying the government on elders specifically, as we will have questions. The purpose of focusing on elders is due to their importance and the fact that Nunavummiut use love as their foundation for elders, Mr. Speaker.

I know many in this House have beloved elders whom they deeply loved, and perhaps some of these beloved elders are still amongst us, while others have passed on this life. In talking about love and compassion as a basis towards our elders leads to consternation and hardships, to use this example of a beloved elder who has to be sent out from their home community outside, or when the elder starts suffering mental or physical degradation.

Mr. Speaker, a question remains hanging as to how much longer our elders will receive proper services in various fields, such as health care, elders' homes, and many questions remain specific to elders' care facilities, as we know the numbers of our elders are increasing annually, and Nunavut elders are unique in Canada.

Our elders are unique in that they are aboriginal Inuit, and within their lifetimes, they have also suffered the most colonial practices that led to a complete lifestyle change and even relocations as many elders were moved to communities. Not all the changes have wrought positive changes. Elders were relocated, forced into residential schools, abused by officials, and even suffered mistreatment by the RCMP.

Mr. Speaker, regular members today want our beloved elders to have good expectations here in Nunavut, and positive changes they can look forward to in the future and that is what we wish to see, to have their families be the base, to respect their cultural practices and language, and to listen to what our elders want to see from this government.

Due to having that focused outlook, Mr. Speaker, regular members will have questions about elders today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Amittuq, followed by the Member for Baker Lake. Member Kaernerck.

Member's Statement 761 – 5(2): Appreciation of Our Elders

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my fellow residents of Amittuq, as well as my colleagues here in our Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, wish to express my thoughts on this issue, as ever since I entered this House, I spoke about

wanting to advocate for our elders, and even ways to provide more assistance from this government for our elders.

We need to incorporate the wisdom of our elders, take advantage of their abilities, and to have their capabilities recognized by the Government of Nunavut. If we take a peek back into our history, I mentioned how elders would use admonishment or disciplinary methods to help us younger people and their abilities still remain alive.

Due to their ability to keep cultural practices alive is why we are able to stand here today, and I keep reiterating the fact that if it weren't for our elders' forging the path, where would Inuit stand today? Their lives originated in igloos, sod huts, and skin tents. Many elders grew up in these Inuit shelters, subsisting on wildlife for their survival, and Inuit have survived up to this current age and we need to express more appreciation for their unending will to survive.

In particular, when discussion revolves around *Inuit Qaujimaqatunqangit* that they are trying to advise this government on, and I can even state this saying perhaps, Mr. Speaker: listening is not the same as hearing, and if the government actually listened, this Government of Nunavut will start winning many more challenges they face, both helping this government as well as our elders, and even disseminate to many Nunavummiut.

>>Applause

In making that statement, I want to clarify what I mean. The minister stated earlier, as the Minister of Human Resources made an announcement about

the need for respect and compassion. Yes, I believe that is a good starting point to all realms involving government.

When this government starts operating in our language both here and elsewhere, then all Nunavummiut would feel ownership and many would become happier to know the government appreciates their culture and language, and to remember that Inuit built this foundation of the Government of Nunavut and to recall that origin. I believe this applies to us Members here in this House, to speak to this fact and inform all Nunavummiut about this fact.

Now, in saying that, when we reach the appropriate item, I will have questions for the Acting Minister of Housing Corporation about how we can enact changes by respecting our elders' wishes to have a safe home, so my questions will be based on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Baker Lake, followed by the Member for Uqqummiut. Member Simailak.

Member's Statement 762 – 5(2): Appreciation of Veterans

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to everyone today and everyone back home.

Mr. Speaker, November 11 is a special day that is remembered right across the country and for a very good reason. Many, many, many people have or had answered the call and signed up to serve

in the Canadian Armed Forces in one of the many different aspects that make up our forces.

We wear the red poppies on our chest each year as it serves a reminder of sacrifices that were made for our freedoms, which I will be grateful for my entire life.

Mr. Speaker, I do know of at least four people who served that are from or living in Baker Lake. They are:

- Kenny Arngna'naaq, he was with Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry;
- Patricia Attungala;
- Lorrain Hart; and
- Charlie Tautuaqjuk.

They were with the combat engineers.

I am certain that when they served their commission, it was with great pride and I thank them for putting in their time with our Canadian Armed Forces. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Uqqummiut, followed by the Member for Rankin Inlet South. Member Keyootak.

**Member's Statement 763 – 5(2):
Services for Unilingual Elders**

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to the people of Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq who are watching and listening to the proceedings, as well as my colleagues here.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the elders and as regular members, our chairperson announced earlier today that we would be focusing on our elders in our questions to the government today and to discuss elder-specific issues.

Mr. Speaker, this statement is true, as our elders require proper services, especially from our government throughout Nunavut. We continue to voice our concerns about our elders and we try to advocate passionately on their behalf.

We don't just need elder facilities, but we need good services especially from within our departments, and particularly the agencies where services are provided, such as government offices. Many elders are unable to read in English. There is still not enough written material and signage available in Inuktitut even today.

If an elder goes by themselves to a department building or office, some elders are unable to read any English literature as they can't read or write in English and because of knowing that fact, I too push hard to improve services provided to unilingual Inuit elders. They are unable to read in English and if they go into a business, some of them have no idea what to do to get services provided, and in many cases, surrounding the matter I queried the minister previously about ATMs and banking machines.

We are aware that today we all depend on money to run our lives, and even our elders are dependent on financial transactions and some of our elders undergo hardship when they try to withdraw funds from banking machines

when there is no Inuktitut signage. I imagine it must be quite difficult for an elder to try to withdraw funds from banking machines. The written signs are all in English, not in Inuktitut.

At the appropriate time I will be reiterating further questions to the Minister of Finance about the lack of Inuktitut signage at banks and ATMs. I'll be asking the Minister of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet South, followed by the Member for Quttiktuq. Member Kusugak.

**Member's Statement 764 – 5(2):
Appreciation of Our Elders**

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, people of Rankin Inlet.

Mr. Speaker, I too wish to rise today as I represent many residents of Rankin Inlet, as I too am a regular member in that regard. I, too, practically every single day and night, worry about our local elders in Rankin Inlet and Nunavut in general.

When you personally lose your beloved elders you used to lean on, it can lead to great hardships in life, Mr. Speaker, when you are the one being treated as an elder. Inuit elders are the single most important part of our cultural lives, and they must always be treated with respect, properly and compassionately.

In Rankin Inlet some of our elders are becoming less mobile and as they become physically weak, they are sent

out to various places throughout Canada, and there are elders in Ottawa who are unilingual, and some of them look for someone to speak to in Inuktitut.

I see myself as a young man still, and when I see an elder in person, they tell me that I am still young in comparison, and when that happens, it makes me miss my grandchildren, although it may only be a couple of weeks since I last saw them. I can only imagine our elders who feel so alone, as they too would want to see relatives such as our Rankin Inlet elders in Ottawa.

Some elders are housed in Arviat, Igloolik, and other places. I feel so much pity for elders in that situation, as they are unable to remain at their homes, Mr. Speaker, so I imagine our children and youth also missing them, so we are all placed in difficult situations when we miss our elders housed elsewhere. Some grandchildren want to see their grandfather or grandmother, and I would like to see a situation where they can see each other and to allow visitations while they are capable of visiting.

It is something that I am very passionate about, Mr. Speaker, to have the best elders' facilities available used in every community if possible. I would love to see elders' facilities in every community so that our elders can always at least see their grandchildren and we must ensure that this happens in Nunavut.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

>> *Applause*

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): This is what I am really wishing to work harder towards in this House, so that

every member sitting here on both sides of this government works diligently and collaborate on achieving this objective.

We are going on the fourth year since we last made a policy statement, actually three years now since we announced we would fight for our elders, and we still have not achieved the objective, so I further encourage everyone to move this file forward and to ensure if our elders require assistance, we must all take a stand to protect our elders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

**Member's Statement 765 – 5(2):
Recognition of Terry Noah of
Ausuittuq Adventures**

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, we must be protective of our elders and provide ongoing support.

Today I want to rise to speak about this individual in Grise Fiord who has their own business and works hard to develop business opportunities. His name is Terry Noah, and he owns (interpretation ends) Ausuittuq Adventures, (interpretation) which is his business.

This week he was providing country food sales via the Internet, or in English, a (interpretation ends) Facebook (interpretation) page, and if you have access to Facebook, you can type up (interpretation ends) Ausuittuq Adventures (interpretation) to see what foods he is offering. He is making

healthy and delicious country foods available from Grise Fiord. He is offering seal meat from Jones Sound, as they taste different from other waters; in my opinion, they are delicious. He was also offering polar bear meat, muskoxen meat, and Peary caribou meat as well. He offers different styles as he smokes some meats, and he is quite a hard worker.

We should try to support our youth who try to create self-employment to stand on their own two feet. I'm very proud of him and I urge my fellow Nunavummiut to buy country food from Grise Fiord. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We are very proud of the young people who are just starting out their businesses in our communities.

Members' Statements. I have no more names on my list. Continuing on. (interpretation ends) Returns to Oral Questions. Minister of the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Ms. Ehaloak.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I have three returns to oral questions, two from the Qulliq Energy Corporation and one from the Department of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, these returns are quite detailed. I have filed them with the Clerk for transcribing into the *Hansard* for the public record and for distribution to all members.

**Return to Oral Question 1000 – 5(2):
QEC Human Resources
Management**

Question 1:

As the minister will recall, I have raised a number of concerns regarding the Qulliq Energy Corporation's human resources management, including its policies regarding overtime for Iqaluit-based employees who are required to travel to other communities to conduct equipment repairs and replacement. Can the minister indicate what specific actions she has taken to address any of these concerns?

Response 1:

Based on our review of the Qulliq Energy Corporation's overtime process with the acting president and CEO, the Qulliq Energy Corporation continues to make decisions on overtime based on resources available and efficiency of staying in a community versus travelling back to staff's home communities. Every operational requirement is different; it is a balance of cost versus ensuring power reliability versus resource availability. Despite the Qulliq Energy Corporation's overtime reduction in the past couple of years, the Qulliq Energy Corporation's power reliability rate has continued to improve.

Regarding the corporation's employee retention, this is actually improving. To date the Qulliq Energy Corporation's turnover rate is currently at 9.68 percent, which is roughly in line with the previous two years. The current turnover rate is lower than it was at a comparable point in the 2017-18 fiscal year. Of the employees who have left the corporation

since 2017-18, overtime has not been reported as a reason for their departure from the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

As a public agency, the Qulliq Energy Corporation is committed to the careful and efficient use of its limited resources while ensuring safe and reliable operations throughout the territory.

**Return to Oral Question 1035 – 5(2):
Sexual Offenders**

Question:

Mr. Speaker, it's important that the government has an accurate picture of how many sexual predators and offenders are living in our communities. Will the minister commit to reviewing the discrepancy between these sets of figures and getting back to the House with a clarification on the numbers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Answer:

The numbers provided in the October sitting to the Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak were less than the number found in the annual report of the Representative for Children and Youth. I can confirm that the numbers provided to the member are in fact the accurate numbers as of August 2020.

The National Sex Offender Registry is administered by RCMP at national headquarters in Ottawa. Over the last year the national headquarters has undertaken a project to verify and update the National Sex Offender Registry.

The discrepancy between the numbers provided in October and the numbers in the annual report of the Representative

for Children and Youth represent the results of the national update of the registry. Specifically, individuals who had either died or moved away from Nunavut were removed from the Nunavut number.

This information has been passed on to the Representative for Children and Youth as well.

**Return to Oral Question 1068 – 5(2):
New Power Plant for Sanirajak**

Question 1:

Can the minister indicate when we are going to get a new power plant, or do you have it already listed in the capital plans?

Response 1:

The Qulliq Energy Corporation prioritizes replacing power plants based on their functionality, not just on their age. Over the next decade the Qulliq Energy Corporation anticipates replacing 11 power plants that were built between 1967 and 1977. The Sanirajak Power Plant, which was built in 1974, is on our list to replace. The Qulliq Energy Corporation anticipates completing the new power plant in Sanirajak by 2030.

Question 2:

When would the minister be able to provide information on whether Sanirajak will be included, as I feel it should be on that list of capital projects or plans? When can the minister inform me if Sanirajak is going to be included in that instalment? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Response 2:

The Qulliq Energy Corporation anticipates completing the Sanirajak Power Plant by 2030, while the AEF funding stream runs until 2028.

Question 3:

Now, if Sanirajak is not going to be included in the list of capital projects, I wonder if the Hamlet of Sanirajak can request a study to determine how to hook up the DEW line facility and our community power lines, or even just an emergency connection if a new power plant isn't feasible for Sanirajak. I wonder what other options or alternatives can be considered in communities that have that possibility.

Response 3:

To ensure Sanirajak has the power generation capacity and stability it needs to grow for the next decade, the Qulliq Energy Corporation installed a new generator set in October 2019.

Connecting to the DEW line site in Sanirajak is unfeasible. The primary concern is that the size of the generator, which is designed to power that single location, is insufficient to power a feeder (section of the community) let alone the whole community. The Qulliq Energy Corporation remains committed to ensuring power stability throughout the territory and will work to ensure disruptions are minimal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Returns to Oral Questions. (interpretation) I have no more names on my list. No. 5.

Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. We will eventually get visitors sometime in the future. We look forward to seeing our fellow Nunavummiut.

Continuing on. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat North will go first, followed by the Member for Kugluktuk. Member Main.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 1098 – 5(2): Partnerships for Elder Care Options

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to ask my questions to our Premier.

This recent announcement from January 21, 2020 was the lead story on the news about the fact that the Nunavut government and Nunavut Tunngavik signed the Katujjiqatigiinniq Protocol. The government and Inuit organizations went on record stating they would work in closer collaboration on shared issues, by using cooperative work to develop shared positions for different matters being considered and there is wording specific to that.

As an example, it speaks to the need for close cooperation on certain matters, to incorporate *Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit* into decisions, and to develop brainstorming sessions on issues where they need to share information with the residents, as it states in English (interpretation ends) information sharing (interpretation) between them.

Mr. Speaker, this was released in January, so my first question to our Premier is: has this close working relationship with the Inuit organizations

proven beneficial towards providing elders' facilities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we did sign the Katujjiqatigiinniq Protocol where the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated president and I have held meetings, both through teleconferences, and I am aware that the NTI president is also quite concerned about elders. However, we haven't discussed in any detail when the elders' care facilities will be built and where they will be located. We have discussed the need for elders' care facilities in Nunavut, but we haven't discussed when they will be built and where they will be located. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am deeply concerned about our elders' homes and elder care in general. From my perspective and my level of understanding, our government is working unilaterally on this file. It seems there are no partnerships to provide further support that stem from the Inuit organizations or even their business corporations.

Can our Premier agree if I asked him if he would write to the Inuit organizations to request their positions and stance on elders' care facilities and of the desire to build facilities on a priority basis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Premier of Nunavut, (interpretation ends) Premier Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I can say that I will write a letter to the Inuit organizations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Premier. When all we hear are negative answers or the inability to agree on shared issues, it can become quite depressing and to even have one positive answer can be quite titillating, so I offer my thanks to our Premier.

>>*Applause*

I am unsure if I will receive another positive answer, but let me ask another question quickly.

>>*Laughter*

This again revolves around this matter which is called in English (interpretation ends) information sharing (interpretation) in the context of keeping each other informed.

(interpretation ends) I guess I'll ask this in English. As part of the request for input or a communiqué reaching out to Inuit organizations, can the Premier commit to sharing as much information as possible with the Inuit organizations on the planning process to date for long-term care facilities in Nunavut? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Premier of Nunavut, (interpretation ends) Premier Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're still finalizing the final details of the information agreement, but I can assure the member that once we have come to an agreement and I have given President Kotierk a timeline of the end of this fiscal year to finalize and sign the information agreement because we do want to share the information agreement.

Some of the information that is shared amongst NTI and the GN are quite confidential, so we want to make sure that whether the information that we give them or that they give us, if it's not supposed to be shared with outside of our two organizations, it would be so. That's why we're still working on it, but I can assure the member and I can assure the president that I did tell NTI President Kotierk that this agreement will be done before the end of this calendar year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk, followed by the Member for Tununig. Member Pedersen.

Question 1099 – 5(2): Supportive Living Facilities for Elders

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, everybody. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

As the minister will recall, the government's *Continuing Care in Nunavut 2015-2035* strategy document

was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on February 26, 2016. Mr. Speaker, the report indicates that:

“Almost every hamlet has a seniors 4plex, which is a single building with four discrete apartments that is meant to be accessible for seniors. It is recommended that [the Department of] Health work with the Nunavut Housing Corporation and the local housing authorities to investigate the options for programming in existing seniors 4plexes...so that Nunavummiut can age in place.”

Mr. Speaker, I believe that enhancements in this area would help to support the ability of our elders to live independent and dignified lives.

Can the minister describe what specific actions the Nunavut Housing Corporation has been taking to address this recommendation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Nunavut Housing Corporation does value its elders and we have lots of elders who are tenants.

Mr. Speaker, we have 18 communities that have public housing units that are tailored for elders to make it easier for the elders to live in. When public housing units are being allotted to a community, the local housing organizations have the option of turning some of those units into elder-friendly facilities. We give them enough advance

notice so that if they're getting...

I'll just take for example if they're getting two five-plexes in one community. If the local housing organization wanted one of those five-plexes to be specifically for elders and for elder access and elder easement of living there, then they can make that recommendation to the Nunavut Housing Corporation and then that's the kind of building that would be designed for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. The *Continuing Care in Nunavut 2015-2035* strategy also indicates that “Residential long-term care can range from very small 2 or 3 bed supportive living houses to large institutional nursing homes...” As the minister will recall, the *Status of Housing Report* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on September 29, 2020. It indicates that “Coming out of the Blueprint for Action on Housing, the Government of Nunavut has created a dedicated working group focusing on housing needs for men, women, families, youth, seniors, Elders, and Nunavummiut living with mental illness or disabilities. This working group is looking at housing that offers supportive services...” Can the minister update the House today on this working group's initiatives in respect to supportive living for elders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently we have two buildings that are dedicated to giving elder care facilities, one is in Arviat and one is in Iqaluit, and those are the only two units that are owned by the housing corporation where senior assisted living is provided on a 24-hour basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister sort of answered this question, but for the benefit of the public, I will go ahead and ask it.

As I noted in the preamble to my first question, the *Continuing Care in Nunavut 2015-2035* strategy indicates that “Almost every hamlet has a seniors 4plex...” Can the minister confirm which communities, if any, are currently lacking these types of facilities and can he describe what plans the Nunavut Housing Corporation has to either construct new seniors’ four-plexes or convert existing housing stock into new supportive living facilities for elders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in my response, I said that 18 communities within Nunavut have customized elders’ public housing units. We have 25 communities, take away 18, so there are seven communities within Nunavut that don’t have that, but

as I also stated, when a community is getting public housing units, the local housing organization has the option of making those elder-friendly units. The option is there.

If a community, as I said, is getting two five-plexes, if they want to have one of those five-plexes converted to elder-friendly or elder user-friendly facility, then we will work with them and design the building so that it is better for elders to live there. Maybe they have a lower kitchen counter, wider doors, hand rails, all that stuff, and the ramp, all the stuff that would make it easier for an elder to live independently. The option is there and we will work with any local housing organization that wants to specifically get elder-friendly public housing units from the public housing units that they are being provided with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Tununig, followed by the Member for Amittuq. Member Qamaniq.

Question 1100 – 5(2): Consultations on Elders’ Care

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to my colleagues, as well as Nunavummiut and the residents of my community.

I will be asking questions in English so that they are clearly understood.

(interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for Seniors.

As the minister is aware, there are currently a number of residential long-

term care facilities in Nunavut. The government's *Continuing Care in Nunavut* strategy document indicates that some facilities are considered to be "Elders Homes" and other facilities are considered to be "continuing care centres."

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clearly describe how the government decides what types of seniors facilities should be located in regional centres and what types of facilities should be located in other communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for Seniors, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those decisions are based upon the assessed medical need of elders, as they need to be placed in a facility that can meet their medical and clinical needs. There are professionals that assess what level of care an individual would need and that would determine where and what type of facility that they would be moved to. The reasoning behind, as I have said many times in this House, Mr. Speaker, of looking at regional centres is to have access the clinical care needed so that our residents can maintain residency in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his answer. As the minister is aware, I have been raising the issue of designating Pond Inlet as the regional centre or "hub community" for

the North Baffin. For example, when it comes to transportation, the government has published documents that confirm Pond Inlet's status as the transportation hub for the North Baffin region. Mr. Speaker, it is my position that Pond Inlet should be formally considered as the regional hub for North Baffin, and the government should plan accordingly when it comes to the issue of where to locate new elders' care facilities. Does the government share my position? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for Seniors, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The position that we do share is that elders need to maintain their residency in Nunavut. It's hard enough when we have to send our elders outside of our community. Our goal right now is to keep them at the very least in the region. When we look at building elder care facilities across the territory, we need to make sure that we're meeting the demand, for one and for two, meeting the level of care that's needed.

For the Qikiqtaaluk region, we have chosen to build a facility here in Iqaluit. The main reason behind that is with the hospital here, we can provide advanced level of care so that our residents don't have to get sent to outside jurisdictions for care. At this time we would not be entertaining building a facility outside of Iqaluit at this moment in Qikiqtaaluk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate that the minister will not consider it.

Can the minister clearly describe how the community of Pond Inlet has been consulted to date on the issue of elders' care and will he commit to formally inviting a submission from the municipality on this important issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Seniors, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like the member has mentioned, there are different levels of elder care, assisted living, or just elder-friendly facilities. As I had mentioned in my appearance last Tuesday when I appeared as the Minister of Health to defend our capital budget, I suggested that there's nothing stopping communities from making or building facilities that can house elders in a non-assisted living manner, which would help ease home care supports through the Department of Health to be able to concentrate elders in a facility.

Most importantly, I think there's a message that is being missed out of all this, Mr. Speaker, is that our goal is to provide safe housing that meets the clinical needs of our elders. I know there has been a lot of discussion and there has been a lot of support for our elders across the territory. It's unfortunate that not every family supports their elders the way they should. We need to provide safe living spaces for our elders, Mr. Speaker. With the limited resources that we have, we have a plan in place and that is to build a 24-bed unit in the

Kivalliq, a 24-bed unit in the Kitikmeot, and a 48-bed unit here in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq, followed by the Member for Gjoa Haven. Member Kaernerck.

Question 1101 – 5(2): Elder-friendly Housing Initiatives

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will also direct my question to the Acting Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation. The Member for Kugluktuk asked his question already, but I'll get to the point of my question. For clarity, I'll speak English on behalf of my constituents.

(interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's blueprint for action was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on October 20, 2016, and the *Status of Housing Report* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on September 29, 2020. As the minister is aware, Action No. 9 in the blueprint for action indicates that the Nunavut Housing Corporation will:

“...engage with [the Department of Culture and Heritage] to develop a method for incorporating Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit (IQ) principles into housing design, particularly in regard to purpose built housing for vulnerable groups, including Elders.”

Can the minister describe some of the specific ways in how this will be incorporated? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Nunavut Housing Corporation does have an Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit coordinator and we do use that position, and when we're building houses in a community, we do consult where the prevailing winds are from, where the snow piles might be, where on the lot the building should be situated in order to be friendly for the wind or for the snow. All of that is taken into consideration when we are building units in a community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister responded and maybe he is reading my mind. I will ask it anyways.

(interpretation ends) As the minister is also aware, the Nunavut Housing Corporation plans to construct 20 units in the community of Sanirajak beginning of current 2020-21 and the community is very pleased and I thank you for providing 20 units. You already answered, but can the minister clarify if the Nunavut Housing Corporation is working with, in the line of question where you already... ?

Let me rephrase my question. Can the minister clarify how the Nunavut Housing Corporation is working with the Sanirajak elders' committee with the respect to the location and design of the

new housing units? (interpretation)
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Acting Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the actual location where buildings are put in a community, we work with the local housing organization and the municipal government, the hamlets, as to where these buildings can go, where they can be placed in the community, where the zoning is right, and where a five-plex can fit, if it's a five-plex.

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the local housing organization works with the elders' committee to get their input. As I stated earlier, if a community wants elder-friendly buildings, then the local housing organization can make that request and the buildings that they're getting can be altered so that they're easier for elders to live in, like I said earlier, wider doors, lower counters, maybe different handles on the doors, different handles on the windows, a ramp, stuff that would make it easier for elders that can't get around as well as younger people to stay in that house and enjoy living in that house. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. That's a great idea. I hope that will be continuing.

My last question to the minister, and he is very aware of this issue, the issue of mould infestation in housing units and he identified \$5 million. It is important for mould remediation efforts to be prioritized on units and yes, you had agreed that there needs to be important work in housing for vulnerable elders and when you know that there are vulnerable elders, especially elders who may have pre-existing health conditions, for example, breathing problems, can the minister indicate how the housing corporation is addressing this concern? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Acting Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As for the local housing organization housing units and dealing with mould remediation, whether they are elders, whether they are young, whether they are an adult, this is an important aspect of our programs because it is important that health conditions have to be a concern for us.

What I can state in this case is that in Sanirajak, the mould remediation trainers arrived into the communities to deal with mould removal and they worked with the Sanirajak LHO maintainers upon their arrival. They provided complete training where the workers were aware of the proper methods of removal in Sanirajak, and the best ways to clean up mould infestations inside the building units.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I should state that the local units require proper air quality as well, and there should be no hazardous

safety issues and if there is mould infestation in the unit, they will be able to remove the mould and that is how we would deal with it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Gjoa Haven, followed by the Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu. Member Akoak.

Question 1102 – 5(2): Gjoa Haven’s Continuing Care Centre

Mr. Akoak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues and the people of Gjoa Haven who are watching the proceedings. First of all, I would like to say that Minister Kusugak made a great statement earlier when he rose to speak about elders. I thank you for that.

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

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will be aware, the continuing care centre in the community of Gjoa Haven has been operating successfully for many years. In fact, not so long ago, the government’s own preplanning documents indicated that plans were being considered to expand the facility and increase the number of beds.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clearly explain why the decision was made not to proceed with the expansion of the Gjoa Haven Continuing Care facility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question. I believe I was probably the minister that initiated that question exactly. When we looked at existing facilities in the territory, such as in Igloolik and in Gjoa Haven, they're very similar buildings and the ten-bed model that they work under is very inefficient and it's very cost-prohibitive. Mr. Speaker, what I had directed the department to do at that time was to look into options to expand, to make it more efficient, and to be able to increase the capacity of it.

Mr. Speaker, when I got feedback from the officials, not only was it an uncomfortable number. When you look at elder care, they work and they're called houses of 12 and when we look at maximizing efficiencies from a care standpoint and a staffing standpoint, the numbers of 12 work best, but one of the decisions that we made, as I have said again many in this House before, the priority is the clinical care of our elders and providing the higher level of care so that we can continue to keep our elders in the communities. As I stated, the major factor in building these new facilities in regional centres is to have access to physicians and enhanced clinical care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently the continuing care facility in Gjoa Haven also has clients from Rankin Inlet and Kugluktuk. Gjoa Haven has strong ties with the communities of Taloyoak and Kugaaruk and, in the absence of suitable facilities at home, I

am confident that elders from those communities who require additional care would much prefer to be located in Gjoa Haven, which is closer to their families, than being sent far away.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clarify what steps are taken to consider the personal circumstances of each elder who needs additional levels of care and to ensure that they are moved to the facility that is closest to their home and family instead of being sent far away? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The proximity to their home community obviously is a factor that's taken into consideration for placement. Mr. Speaker, until we actually have capacity in the territory to deal with the need, we have to rely upon spaces within the territory and that is why sometimes there are people even from other regions that are moved to facilities that we have in another region that is even farther away from home. It's not a comfortable decision, but the alternative is to send them out of the territory.

Mr. Speaker, we do work with families and we do work with the facilities on the placement side of things to, again, make sure that we're meeting the clinical need from the assessed need from the level of care that they need to be provided, and the proximity to their home community is taken into consideration and obviously, where available, then they would be placed in the closest facility as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.

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

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was very disappointed that the plans to expand the Gjoa Haven Continuing Care Centre were not followed through with. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this facility could offer a safe and comfortable place for elders from the surrounding communities who need this level of support. However, even with the current number of beds, the Gjoa Haven Continuing Care Centre provides wonderful care to our elders and should do so well into the future.

Mr. Speaker, I would like a commitment from the minister that the Gjoa Haven Continuing Care Centre will not be closed down once beds open up in the government's newly built long-term care facilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The facility in Gjoa Haven does provide excellent care, Mr. Speaker, as do all of our facilities that we operate. Mr. Speaker, I have been to that facility and the staff and the people in there are incredible. The community is so welcoming. They even go so far as to have elders' nights where they pick up other elders that reside in the community to have social engagements, maybe not so much under these COVID conditions.

Mr. Speaker, I don't even know how to even continue to repeat myself. I will not be closing any of our current elder facilities under my watch.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, followed by the Member for Netsilik. Member Angnakak.

Question 1103 – 5(2): COVID-19 Precautions

Ms. Angnakak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Good afternoon, everybody and Nunavummiut, (interpretation) especially the elders. I send you my regards.

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

Mr. Speaker, with the rapid increase in COVID-19 cases in southern jurisdictions, concerns about our loved ones and family members who are receiving care down south are rising.

Can the minister clarify how his department monitors the delivery of services in residential care homes in the south which are contracted to provide services to Nunavut residents and how he ensures that they are following the required COVID-19 protocols? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Mr. Speaker, I welcome this question from the member. We only contract one facility for our senior care in the south, and we have

heard horror stories of the level of care in some of the facilities in Canada and around the world in senior facilities. The sacrifices that the staff of that facility has made is unbelievable. They've had staff sleeping in RVs in the parking lots. They don't even go home to their families.

Mr. Speaker, the level of care and the ongoing communication on COVID protocols, they're exceeding the Ontario protocol standards for COVID-19. Mr. Speaker, not one resident of that facility has contracted COVID-19 and they're working every day to make sure that it stays that way. I don't even know what else to say, Mr. Speaker. The staff in that facility is just doing an exemplary job. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's good to hear. That's what we want to hear. We want to make sure that things are being done okay and that they're being monitored.

Mr. Speaker, the dramatic statistics of COVID-19 cases in long-term care homes in the south is a huge concern. As the minister is aware, over 30 Nunavut residents, most of them elders, are currently receiving care at the Embassy West Retirement Home in Ottawa.

Can the minister confirm that the Embassy West facility has up-to-date COVID-19 precautions to ensure that the virus does not enter the home and, if so, can he describe some of the steps they

are taking to prevent Nunavummiut from being exposed to the virus? Now, the minister did mention that some staff were sleeping there and never went home, but if he can elaborate on some of the other precautions that the Embassy West is taking to ensure that the residents remain virus-free. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hicke.

Hon. George Hicke: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the greatest hardships that a lot of our seniors have experienced during this COVID-19 pandemic is the lack of contact with their families. Thankfully technology has been able to mitigate some of that. With the non-essential travel restrictions that we have put in place, families aren't allowed to visit their elders in the facility and I can't even imagine how challenging that is for all families. I realize that. There are families all over the world that are separated from their grandparents and parents right now, and it's for their own safety.

Mr. Speaker, there is screening for every shift. When workers go into the facility, they are screened for symptoms and their temperature is taken. Any symptomatic or any minor symptoms, they're sent home for a period of time until they can be tested and confirmed negative. Mr. Speaker, they have done such a good job in the screening that there have been two incidents of staff testing positive to COVID-19, but not one contact or one... I can't even think of the right word right now, Mr. Speaker. Not of their workers contracted COVID-19 from those workers because of these safety

measures that are put in place to catch COVID before it gets into the facility.

Mr. Speaker, the hygiene that the staff is undertaking, I know Ontario has eliminated people working from across other jobs and other facilities to maintain their own staffing levels. Mr. Speaker, I could go on, but I have to say again that to date not only are they sacrificing their personal family times and putting our residents before their own families; it's hard to argue with the success that they've had to date.

Mr. Speaker, there's a lot of talk of for-profit long-term care facilities and different operation methods. Mr. Speaker, I can't give them enough credit for the job that they have been doing, keeping our residents safe under very uncomfortable circumstances, and for the residents. There are restrictions on how much time they can spend outside. There are not the normal social outings that they're typically used to.

For people who are under care for dementia reasons especially, it's especially difficult to comprehend why their families are not visiting or why they're not able to go on their regular outings. I can't have enough empathy for the families who are involved with these elders in there, but I have to assure all members that they're in a very safe place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thanks to the minister for his response. It's good that the minister feels very confident in this. I think that makes

everybody feel a bit better.

Mr. Speaker, I do recognize and the minister did relate to this a bit about employment that the COVID-19 pandemic has put enormous pressure on health care workers across the country and indeed the world. We read of health care workers burning out or just becoming exhausted.

Can the minister clarify whether he receives regular updates from such residential care contractors as the Embassy West on their staffing situation and whether they are able to maintain the required level of care for Nunavut residents who are receiving care in their facility while the COVID-19 pandemic is ongoing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I myself am not part of the conversation, we have officials that from our Home and Continuing Care Division that are in communication very regularly with the Embassy West Senior Living Facility. Likely the only time I would hear anything is if there were concerns being made up to my level, and I haven't been made aware of any concerns to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, followed by the Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak. Member Qirngnuq.

Question 1104 – 5(2): Caring for Elders at Home

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to my fellow residents of Netsilik, as well as my colleagues here and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, we are basing our questions today on our elders. Mr. Speaker, I would first like to say that when we were young and had children, we would miss our children if they went somewhere else and as adults today, it’s sort of the other way around now. We know that. I would like to direct my question about elders to the Department of Health.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, there are elders living in every community of Nunavut. Life today is much different than it was 50 years ago. These days today it is like rush, rush, rush we’re in the world living.

Mr. Speaker, our elders are respected by our youth, but lifestyles are very different today. It seems we don’t have the time to look after our elders in the ways that they need. We need a greater understanding of how our elders can be cared for today in this modern world.

Can the minister clarify what kinds of training or resources are available to families or family members to help them to continue caring for their elders in the family home? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really appreciate this question. Mr. Speaker, our Nunavut Arctic College has some great programming that is available, maybe not in every community. I’m not aware of what communities it is offered in or isn’t. Personal care workers, dealing with dementia, there are a number of different programs that Nunavut Arctic College has from an education standpoint.

I think even more importantly, I’ve had questions recently on home care and the level of service that’s provided there. I think there’s a real opportunity for families to be engaged. I think at the whole start of elder care, it’s the family. It starts with the family. That’s where I think that there needs to be more focus and more collaboration with our home and community care workers in the communities by families communicating on what they can do to help provide. I know those personal care workers would be happy to provide some guidance and direction and ideas of how to care for your elderly parent or grandparent, aunt, uncle, the list goes on, friends and neighbours.

Mr. Speaker, please, any time that there is a question with the level of care that’s being provided in the community, talk to your homecare workers, talk to the homecare nurses on what the family can do to help support the elders in their home in their community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the minister for the clear response. Today the young people are like that in our communities, in many communities as well.

(interpretation ends) There are times when a family member may be willing and able to provide care and support for an elder but this would be that they no longer have a job or even part-time employment.

Can the minister clarify whether there are any programs in place which provide an allowance or financial support for caregivers of elders in their home?

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is obviously a very intelligent man and I say that because I've had similar ideas. I would like to think of him in at least similar bearing as Mr. Qirngnuq.

>> *Laughter*

I think there is an opportunity for that. It's very, and to be blunt, Mr. Speaker, I've had some discussions with my officials on this sometime back in ransomware and COVID-19, all these things seemed to take priority over, but I think it's definitely a discussion that needs to be had.

I know there is some recognition at the federal level. I don't remember the exact details but there are, through the COVID situation right now, there are monies available to help family members to get

some type of income to help care for elders.

I will do some research myself, Mr. Speaker, and pass that information unto the member but I think it's an important discussion for all of us to have, of different opportunities for family members to have access to training and provide some type of compensation because they are unable to work while they are caring for elder family members.

It's a very complicated process and I can't imagine it happening overnight but I think that discussion needs to start.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the minister for the very clear response. These days, especially when elders don't want to leave their community they're going through very hard time mentally. They don't want to leave their children and one of my colleagues stated earlier, because of COVID-19, it's always brought up here in the House.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the global COVID-19 pandemic has raised many concerns for Nunavummiut. When we consider our elders who are more vulnerable than others in our population it is important to know how best to protect them from this virus.

Can the minister describe what plans or initiatives are in place to specifically protect the elders who are living at home in our communities from the COVID-19

virus? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From a health standpoint we've put in a number of different measures and protocols in place, limiting gatherings, strongly suggesting the social distancing and the hand hygiene of it.

Mr. Speaker, we also have a personal obligation. I know some family members that have taken initiative where they have vulnerable elders with other health conditions that they're deeming high risk, that there is one or two family members that are designated specifically to help care, bring food, try to provide some social interaction, and those family members are themselves putting even extra layers on their own safety so that if COVID-19 does enter a community, they're not exposing their loved ones to this terrible virus.

Mr. Speaker, the government has put in the ideals, but it's up to each and every one of us to make sure that we protect our family members and we take our own protocols in place to help make sure that our elders stay safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, followed by the Member for Uqqummiut. Member Lightstone.

Question 1105 – 5(2): Elder Designated Housing Units

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

It has been stated on multiple occasions over this current sitting that there are currently 18 communities with public housing units which are specially designed and dedicated for elders. Mr. Speaker, my first question for the minister today is: of those 18 communities with elder-specific housing, how many public housing units does that represent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Acting Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have that level of detail in front of me, but just from the type of houses that the Nunavut Housing Corporation has been making for the past 15 years or so, most of the units that are built are five-plexes and ten-plexes, mostly five-plexes, so I would imagine that most of those are five-plexes, but I don't have the number of how many units are there in those 18 communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's unfortunate that the minister does not have that information. It seems as though the Nunavut Housing Corporation was anxious to identify that there were 18 communities. However, I do invite the minister to provide that

information at a later date through a return to oral question.

Mr. Speaker, my next question, I understand why the Nunavut Housing Corporation would delegate the authority of selecting the unit type to the local housing organizations as they know the true need for their communities, but next question for the Premier is: when was the last time a local housing organization had requested that units be designed specifically for elders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Acting Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member said, the local housing organization is in a position to recommend the number of housing units to be elder-friendly. Mr. Speaker, for the building season in the future, if all the local housing organizations wanted all of the public housing units to be elder-friendly, then that's what we would do. We rely on their requests, but as to specifically as when the next one would be, there are 16 units that are going to be elder-friendly coming here to Iqaluit in the very near future, starting next year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Moving on to my last question, I do believe it's appropriate for local housing authorities to select the unit size and types to meet the needs for their

communities, but I do believe it is a difficult decision for LHOs to make. I would like to ask if the minister believes from his point of view whether or not LHOs utilize this decision to designate new construction as elder design-builds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Acting Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Nunavut Housing Corporation gives an X number of units to a community and the local housing organization decides what type, how many bedrooms that they want, and if any of the buildings should be elder-friendly.

Mr. Speaker, we are not going to dictate to the local housing organizations on how they should choose what type of housing that they want for the community. We will leave that decision with them. It's a decision that should be made locally and it will be made locally. We are not going to dictate to any of the local housing organizations how many elder-friendly units they're going to get, how many two-, three-, or one-bedrooms they're going to get. That is left to each community and each community will make that decision.

When a decision is made and passed on to the Nunavut Housing Corporation, we will obligate their request. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, followed by the Member for Baker Lake. Member Keyootak.

Question 1106 – 5(2): Banking Services for Elders

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good afternoon” to the people who are watching the proceedings in Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Finance and they concern the issue of banking services for elders.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, his department issued a request for proposals for financial services to be provided to the Government of Nunavut. This contract was subsequently awarded to the Royal Bank of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, Appendix B of the request for proposals required proponents to provide “details of current and/or anticipated programs to expand banking services to communities across Nunavut.”

Mr. Speaker, modern technology allows banks to offer ATM services in many different languages. However, although the Royal Bank’s ATMs here in Iqaluit have a Chinese language option, they do not offer an Inuit language option, which would make life much easier for unilingual elders, including elders from Clyde River and Qikiqtarjuaq who come here for medical travel.

Will the minister commit to raising this issue with the Royal Bank? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the member made his member’s statement earlier, I have already reached out to my officials to enquire to see if they could take advantage of their contacts within the banking industry to see what level of services could be provided in other languages. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for that response. Mr. Speaker, as I noted in the preamble to my first question, Appendix B of the Department of Finance’s Request for Proposals for Banking Services required proponents to provide “details of current and/or anticipated programs to expand banking services to communities across Nunavut.” Can the minister clarify what specific commitments the Royal Bank made in its proposal with respect to banking services for elders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the goals of this type of a contract is to provide banking services at the community level, operated by community members to make sure that there are language requirements. With regard to specific obligations under section B, I’m sorry I don’t have that level of detail, but I can assure the member that my officials are listening and as soon as they have an opportunity to update me, I will pass on that

information to the member. Thank you.

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

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was pleased to see signage at the Royal Bank's Iqaluit branch which indicated that seniors would be prioritized for service in line during the current COVID-19 pandemic. However, the signage was not in the Inuit language. Will the minister commit to raising the issue of multilingual signage with the Royal Bank? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the same time as my officials reach out to the institutions, like I had mentioned earlier from his first question, I will make sure that they make note that through Culture and Heritage there are grants available to assist with signage and translation services, and hopefully they will participate in that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members will note that... . Member Angnakak.

Motion 095 – 5(2): Extension of Question Period

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Rule 39(7), I move, seconded by the Member for Hudson Bay, that the time allotted for oral questions be extended. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order and is not subject to debate. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and question period is extended for an additional 30 minutes.

(interpretation) Oral Questions. Member for Baker Lake, followed by the Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu. Member Simailak.

Question 1107 – 5(2): Update on Martha Talirug Centre

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke emotionally about the Martha Talirug Centre closure. It is not known in this House, I would imagine, but Martha Talirug was actually my late grandmother; she was my mother's mother. As you can see, the facility has a very special spot in my heart.

Mr. Speaker, last week in response to my questions about elder care in the community of Baker Lake, the minister indicated that immediately after the decision to close the Martha Talirug Centre, he added five home care positions to the health centre to help support seniors living at home to stay in their community.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know: how has Baker Lake been consulted on the closure of the Martha Talirug Centre? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickee.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There wasn't a consultation. The contract was cancelled due to underperformance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the response, minister, which is actually disappointing. Why was Baker Lake not consulted? It's known that there is a need there for this facility. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can assure the member that it wasn't for financial reasons it was closed...well, not our financial reasons anyway. Mr. Speaker, after numerous years of trying to work with the contractor, they were not compliant with the contract conditions and unfortunately the contract had to be cancelled. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister, for the response. If my community were to put together a proposal of some sort for a new facility, would the department accept a proposal from the community of Baker Lake or a group from Baker Lake to open up a new facility for elder care? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I have stated before, there's nothing stopping a community from building and operating some type of a facility of that nature, but like I had mentioned before, our plans in the Kivalliq right now is to build a 24-bed facility in Rankin Inlet and until such time as the capacity would exceed that need, it would be very difficult to determine whether additional facilities would be required in that region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, followed by the Member for Amittuq. Member Angnakak.

Question 1108 – 5(2): Elder Designated Units for Iqaluit

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Acting Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday, November 2, the minister announced that there are 18 communities with units customized for elders, with a further eight being constructed in Iqaluit, although I did hear the minister say 16 a little bit earlier. I fully support having dedicated housing for our elders.

Can the minister clarify whether the eight new customized units being built in Iqaluit will be designated specifically for Iqaluit residents or will they be made available to any elder from Nunavut who

may be moving to the capital to be closer to medical care and other elder support services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Acting Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad I have this opportunity to come back to the same subject. I passed a note to the Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak that it is...I said 16, but it's 8 out of 16, and I was going to have to do a return to oral question, but now I don't have to, Mr. Speaker. It's 8 of the 16 units that will be elder-friendly.

Mr. Speaker, when these units are completed, it will be up to the local housing authority as to who gets into these units. Mr. Speaker, the Nunavut Housing Corporation will not be involved in giving out the public housing units. That's the role of the local housing authority here in Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought it was important to ask that because, in the past, with the current elders' centre that we have, it's elders coming from various communities and it has raised some concerns for Iqalumiut.

Mr. Speaker, it is mostly due to the chronic lack of housing in Iqaluit that many elders feel obliged to allow family members to stay with them. In many cases there are far more family members

in an elder's unit than there are bedrooms. Elders feel that they don't have a choice in allowing people to stay as they certainly don't want to throw a family member out on the streets.

Can the minister clarify whether there is any kind of monitoring of who actually resides in these dedicated elder units and what supports are provided to address situations of overcrowding or to rehouse family members who are not eligible to stay in these units? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Acting Minister responsible for Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with the member that there are many elders that have either their children or grandchildren or relatives living with them because they do love their relatives.

At times this is the issue when the elder passes away and the people living in these houses have to leave when in an elders' dedicated facility.

Mr. Speaker, to the best of my knowledge Nunavut Housing Corporation does not track on who lives in what house. If it's an elder living in this house I don't believe we track as to who lives with this elder. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would just like to say that I think it's something that should be tracked. It has been raised to me by some of my constituents as a real concern because it puts elders in a really awkward situation.

Not only do elders feel responsible for the individuals who end up living there due to the lack of housing options elsewhere, but there are also concerns for their personal security and safety. There have been a number of occasions where these dedicated elder units such as the one in Iqaluit has been broken into and personal possessions were stolen. The residents end up feeling more vulnerable than ever.

Will the minister commit to ensuring that when government housing is dedicated for elder use consideration is also given to providing ongoing services for the protection and safety of its elderly residents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Acting Minister of Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Nunavut Housing Corporation builds houses we build them to the best standards that are there and available in terms of strong doors, strong windows.

I'm not sure if the member means like security service. I'm not sure how to answer that question, but right now we make sure that the outside of the buildings are well lit up and that the doors are secure.

In terms of it's for security service, to the best of my knowledge, we're not looking at providing security to elders' facilities, but we will make sure that all of Nunavut Housing Corporation units are built to the standards so that they are safe. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq followed by Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Member Kaernerck.

Question 1109 – 5(2): Elder Accessible Homes

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker for recognizing me again. I will direct my questions to the Acting Minister of Nunavut Housing Corporation, as I don't think my question is visible.

>> *Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I queried the minister responsible for elders about this present situation in Igloolik that an elder is experiencing. An elder vacated their unit which was the elders' home, which is a four-plex building.

I wonder if the Nunavut Housing Corporation units, as I mentioned earlier that the units should be easily accessible and not difficult to enter and that need. You also responded that yes that should be the case as they are working in cooperation with the Department of Culture and Heritage.

Mr. Speaker, is it possible to prioritize existing units that are encumbered by long stairways, whether they can also look into that challenge when they are constructing future units?

Can they set aside specific funds to address the current issues elders face in Igloolik, for the eight units used for elders' homes? Is there a possibility of resolving those challenges in Igloolik for the elders' homes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some LHO units are set aside for elders, and most have stairs, but some units also have wheelchair ramps, and I am aware that a LHO will sometimes do work, if an elder moves into the unit or if the resident elder has mobility issues.

If they require a walker or a wheelchair, then the ramps are built for those units, if they require wheelchair access, and it is a responsibility of the LHO workers to build these ramps locally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, can the Nunavut Housing Corporation employees, perhaps due to our dialectal differences, since you referred to the LHO being responsible for, can the NHC employees review the situation in Igloolik to determine how best to resolve the issue of stairways at the elders' homes?

Can they work to make accessibility easier, whether they remove the long stairways or to improve them by using

landings? The Member for Uqqummiut also expressed concerns about this issue.

Can the Nunavut Housing Corporation work closely with the local housing organization on improving the elders' home in Igloolik? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I apologize. The units that are occupied by elders are generally public housing units, so we can look into the unit to determine if the elder or another tenant with physical disabilities requires a ramp. The NHC and the LHO can look into what can be done about it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): I also thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate that response as they will review that situation in the near future.

And further, another matter Mr. Speaker, where I want the acting Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation to agree if funding can be set aside for existing units already in use? Can they provide funding to the LHOs to begin work on construction of a ramp or other easier access method? Can they provide funds for that purpose? I want the minister to approve it in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.

Acting Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For a proper response, I would like to get clarification on whether the member is asking about old buildings that already exist or construction of new buildings? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Please clarify that, Mr. Kaernerik.

Mr. Kaernerik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Let me rephrase my question. Can the Nunavut Housing Corporation only give funds for those already existing eight facilities in Igloolik to allocate funds? And I would the minister commit to the assembly that there'll be funds allocated for these eight existing facilities in Igloolik. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you for explaining that. (interpretation ends) Minister for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for clarifying his request. Mr. Speaker, the eight units that the member is talking about, I'm not sure, I have not seen them so I don't know if they have. Some facilities have ramps already in them but we will work with the local housing organization in Igloolik.

Some of the elders may request or may want a ramp but some may not but we will work with them and we can work with the local housing organization and

work with them. If they need a ramp we will work with them to make sure that a ramp is built. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1110 – 5(2): Repurposing Capital Assets

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Community and Government Services in regards to the government's old infrastructure that they can be reutilized.

Mr. Speaker, we all know about infrastructure. We are lacking in money for infrastructure in Nunavut and in the communities, for example, in Kinngait, whenever a new infrastructure is made, like a health centre, what they are going to do with the old health centre is what comes to mind, and in Arviat we are lacking in infrastructure. Even if the infrastructure or building is old, it can still be useful to the community and people know that and people look at them.

My first question is: can the minister explain to the House about what action is taken for surplus or old infrastructure? What does the Department of Community and Government Services do when a building becomes available or surplus? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I thank my colleague for asking that question. Mr. Speaker, with respect to pieces of old infrastructure such as old office buildings or some other old equipment have to first be identified by the department that is using the building, as an example, for old health centres.

When a health centre is identified as being no longer needed for usage, the first call would be to have the Department of Health release their interest in the old facility which we are just using as an example here.

If the building is no longer required for operational purposes, then it is released to the Department of Community and Government Services, who would then send a call out to the different departments to determine if any interest exists in that building, whether it would be used for office space or some other facility.

If no government department is interested in this old health centre we are using as our example, the next category identified for determination of interest are the municipal governments or hamlets where the building is located, if they are interested in the building.

If no interest exists from the municipal government, the next groups we consult for an interest are the non-profit organizations or local bodies to determine if there is any interest, but again, only if the building isn't a total write-off.

Prior to the previous old health centre being released which we are using here, if the building will no longer be occupied, there is usually a reason for that. If they identified the need for a new

health centre due to the dilapidated condition of the old centre, then CGS officials would review the situation to determine what condition rating it has, whether it is a write-off or how much funding would be required to renovate it.

After this whole rigmarole process, if our department isn't interested, they offer it to the local government, and if the hamlet is not interested, then it goes to the non-profit or volunteer groups or to the bodies that express interest. These are the many steps required to complete this process, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. This is an important reason why hamlets should receive first bids on infrastructure, which is what I prefer, since all members are aware of the large infrastructure deficits of our hamlets.

And further, it relates to the ability of each community to work independently, and to be able to operate singularly, without an outside government department arbitrarily making decisions on what they should get. Communities get told, "You will only receive this piece of infrastructure and no others." This occurs even when a community states their desire to choose a different infrastructure project, but the outside government flexes their political muscle and states that no such project will be approved. If we want our communities to become self-sufficient, then that should be the operational direction of this department, Mr. Speaker.

Now, in asking about infrastructure, does any kind of inventory list exist under CGS where old infrastructures were provided to the local hamlets or which are in the process of being transferred to the hamlets in future years? Does any kind of inventory list exist or does CGS even keep track of it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government tries not to arbitrarily make decisions such as telling the hamlets that “You cannot get that infrastructure project” and that it isn’t necessary. What we do is to determine how the piece of infrastructure requested by the community can be provided to them, and sometimes it is an easy process to do that, and other times it becomes almost impossible.

Mr. Speaker, where we seem to have problems is the length of the review process for buildings no longer in usage, such as old office buildings and the like, as right now it takes an interminable time to complete the review and I totally agree. Oftentimes it can take over a calendar year to complete a review of old infrastructure, such as an old health centre, that then is vandalized due to being unoccupied with all windows broken and no longer usable due to the destruction of the unoccupied building. Today in my department we are trying to shorten this process that leads to other problems such as our example of an old health centre and what possible repurposing we can use it for.

As a matter of fact, we are working on an initiative when CGS constructs a new health centre. Again, it’s just a hypothetical situation, if we are looking to construct a new health centre, as part of the planning process, we are starting to immediately look for an expression of interest in the old centre and for which purpose it can be used for. Here I mean while the centre is still occupied, but prior to being left unoccupied. We are trying to shorten the process, and yes, we have lists of old infrastructure write-offs or end of lifecycle lists. I can make that list available upon request, if the lists are available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. Prior to my asking my question earlier, I spoke briefly of the need for the self-sustainability of our hamlets, to become more self-sufficient. I wonder since that is an objective I want to work towards, whether hamlets can become more independent and not be so dependent on the territorial government for its operations, as this is in the context of self-governance. The reasoning should be perhaps to incorporate more Inuit practices into the operations of the hamlet and it would become more culturally appropriate.

With respect to self-governance and independence in capital plans inherently leading to problems, I want to ask the minister this last question. Does the minister share my vision that the communities should be more independent? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad that you're asking that question, my colleague. Back in the Third Assembly, I was elected to the government and I sat as a member of that government, and during those years, Mr. Speaker, the practise usually was that, to use this hypothetically.

If the Hamlet of Arviat wanted to get a frontend loader, they would contact their local MLA here in the House, who was directed to query me on where the status of a frontend loader for the community of Arviat was. They would ask to include the equipment in capital plans for that year, and the community would receive their frontend loader. That was how the practice evolved, so if a community wanted a fire truck, they would not be able to get it approved except if it was changed at the Legislative Assembly level, when funding allocations were approved.

When I was appointed as the minister for this department, Mr. Speaker, we completely changed the process. We stated that the hamlets should be funded capital budgets annually, so that they can review their list of assets to determine which piece of infrastructure or equipment was the next priority such as a frontend loader, or an excavator or a piece of heavy equipment. We felt that was their choice to make that decision based on their needs.

We thought an actual capital expenditures budget should be allocated to each community to make decisions on

their own, and that we should fund them adequate funds to purchase the equipment they needed, and to determine when equipment should be replaced on their own initiative. That was the first step in encouraging the hamlets to become more independent. That, I believe, was the first actual progress made towards hamlet self-governance in this area. We wanted the hamlets to make those decisions independently.

At this time we are discussing within our department as to how much more independency we can provide. We just discussed last week the need to provide funding for hamlets to replace garages that are needed in Nunavut, and to have the hamlets and not the department determine when the garages should be built, and to provide the funding for each hamlet to enable the replacement of garages upon need or emergencies. We are looking at increasing the capital budgets for the hamlets for this purpose, so we need to look for supplementary appropriations.

I concur with my colleague about the need to ensure each hamlet can arrive at local decisions on capital purchases with the freedom to spend up to the limit of that budget. I'm sure each hamlet will be different, but we got to think about that in the future. I agree that hamlets should be able to make their own decisions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Question 1111 – 5(2): Surplused Facilities

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services, and I would like to follow up on my colleague Mr. Main's questions on surplused assets.

My first question for the minister is: currently how many surplused facilities the Department of Community and Government Services currently have in its possession? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As to exactly how many there are, I don't know. I can estimate that there are probably 16 surplus buildings, around that number. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the response, although I'm a bit surprised that there are currently 16 facilities remaining vacant and unused across the territory.

The minister in a previous response indicated that it's unfortunate that the number of these assets remain vacant and unused for a number of years and lead to vandalism and other issues. Of these 16 assets, is the minister aware of any in particular which have been remained unused for a significant

amount of time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how long that they have been unutilized. I don't have that number. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is in relation to the surplus assets, one in particular here in Iqaluit, the old residence which was surplused by Nunavut Arctic College a number of years ago. Mr. Speaker, this facility has remained dormant for a number of years. I understand that it is due to asbestos and other concerns. Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that this large asset is still remaining vacant and unused. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister: what are the intentions of this particular asset? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister for Community and Government Services, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not want any colleague to imagine that surplus buildings existing today are all in a condition to be immediately occupied, as some buildings are available for usage while other buildings are so dilapidated

it is unwise.

As an example, the old Ukiivik residence building as not all buildings can be readily moved into, and we should not think that buildings are waiting for future renovation funding only, Mr. Speaker. Many of these antiquated buildings were no longer utilized for various reasons. Some facilities are inundated with dangerous materials, while others suffer mould infestation, and others are destroyed and various reasons validate why the buildings are either condemned or left behind.

Mr. Speaker, the reason why many old buildings are no longer used, and in mentioning the old Ukiivik Residence, it has been abandoned for quite some time, and there are many reasons for no longer using that facility, and my officials are checking into the building to see if any repurposing is available, and whether it can be used. It can be utilized for different purposes, if the foundation and the structural bones are still strong. Nonetheless, we are conducting reviews on the various buildings to see if we can still use them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members, please note that the time for oral questions has expired. We will move to written questions. (interpretation ends) Returns to Written Questions. Replies to Opening Address. (interpretation) Petitions. Responses to Petitions. Item 12. (interpretation ends) Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. (interpretation) Item 13. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Minister Ehaloak.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 321 – 5(2): 2019-2020 QEC Annual Report

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I am pleased table the Qulliq Energy Corporation's 2019-2020 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. Minister of Justice, Ms. Ehaloak.

Tabled Document 322 – 5(2): 2018-2019 Family Abuse Intervention Act Annual Report

Tabled Document 323 – 5(2): 2019-2020 Family Abuse Intervention Act Annual Report

Tabled Document 324 – 5(2): Nunavut Law Foundation 2019 Annual Report

Tabled Document 325 – 5(2): Nunavut Legal Services Board 2017-2018 Annual Report

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to table four documents:

- The 2018-19 and the 2019-2020 *Family Abuse Intervention Act* Annual Report;
- The Nunavut Law Foundation's Annual Report for the year ending December 31, 2019;

- And finally, the Legal Services Board of Nunavut's 2017-18 Annual Report.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. (interpretation) Let's go to the next item. Notices of Motions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Item 14: Notices of Motions

Motion 096 – 5(2): Legislative Assembly Appointments and Revocations – Notice

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, November 6, 2020 I will move the following motion.

(interpretation ends) NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Amittuq, that the Legislative Assembly make appointments under section 17 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions. (interpretation) Continuing on. No. 15. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. (interpretation) No. 16. Motions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Item 16: Motions

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Motion 096 – 5(2): Legislative Assembly Appointments and Revocations

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

(interpretation ends) AND WHEREAS section 17 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* provides that the Legislative Assembly may establish such committees to aid and advise it as it considers necessary;

AND WHEREAS section 38 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act* provides for the appointment of members of the Management and Services Board;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly is prepared to make appointments and revocations;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Amittuq, that the Legislative Assembly make appointments under section 17 of the *Legislative Assembly and Executive Council Act*;

AND FURTHER I MOVE that Patterk Netser, Member for Aivilik, be appointed a member of the Standing Committee on Legislation, a member of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts, and a member of the Standing Committee on Social Wellness;

AND FURTHER I MOVE that the appointments of Margaret Nakashuk as a member of the Management and Services Board, a member of the Standing Committee on Legislation, a member of the Standing Committee on Oversight of Government Operations and Public Accounts, and a member of the Standing Committee on Social Wellness be revoked.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Motions. Continuing on. First Reading of Bills. 18. Second Reading of Bills. 19. (interpretation ends) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bill 25 with Mr. Rumbolt in the Chair.

In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 86 – 5(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

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

(interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:54 and Committee resumed at 16:24*

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

Chairman (Mr. Rumbolt): Good afternoon, members. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole we have the following item to deal with: Bill 25. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to commence the clause-by-clause review of Bill 25. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. Are we in agreement that we deal with Bill 25?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 25 – An Act to Amend the Education Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Thank you. I would now like to ask Minister Joanasié: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Nunavummiut. Yes, I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. For the record, Minister Joanasié, if you could please

introduce your witnesses and then continue into your opening comments. Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my right I have Deputy Minister Kathy Okpik and to my left is legislative analyst for the department, Matilda Madekufamba.

(interpretation) Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to appear before you for the clause-by-clause review of Bill 25, *An Act to Amend the Education Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act*.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Nunavummiut and our education stakeholders for their participation in the development of the bill.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, the dedication showed by Nunavummiut of all age groups to improving our education system has been inspiring, from the participation of youth, parents, and elders during the consultation, to the discussions we have had with our stakeholders and the Standing Committee on Legislation during the November 2019 hearings. We as Nunavummiut have modelled the principle of *Piliriqatigiinniq*.

(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Standing Committee on Legislation for their continued support and commitment to Nunavut's education system. It has been evident throughout the review of this bill that the Members of this House are dedicated to ensuring that our children receive the best education possible and in the Inuit language.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, it has been a pleasure to work with the standing committee to improve Bill 25. Eight motions to amend the bill have now been passed by standing committee, six of which are substantive changes and two are minor corrections.

The six substantive changes are related to principal reporting on inclusive education, ministerial reporting on student assessments, district education authority discretion on school enrolment, bilingual education, and staffing for the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities.

The remaining two amendments are a correction to a misnumbering in the bill and an incorrect reference to the "District Education Authority Council" that should have been a reference to the "District Education Authority Coalition."

(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, the thorough review of Bill 25, including the public hearings in November 2019, has resulted in a more comprehensive bill than we could all have imagined and I am pleased to bring this bill before the Committee of the Whole for you to review and for your consideration.

The variety of views and opinions that have been expressed since we began this work in 2013 has shown us that Nunavut has a diverse population with diverse needs. They have emphasized the necessity of an education system that is open, welcoming, and inclusive to meet the needs of students and families. At the same time they have reiterated the importance of building an environment that supports our teachers, principals, and all members of the school team.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, Bill 25 recognizes the uniqueness of each of our communities and the need to ensure that the education program reflects the local language, culture, and priorities of each community. As such, the district education authorities, with funding and support from the department, will continue to establish local education program enhancements, which are additional courses in all grade levels or modifications to the curriculum. A good example of this is the Nuna School Program at Nanook School here in Apex, where curriculum is blended with *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* in a land-based approach to learning.

(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, additionally, Bill 25 allows district education authorities to employ *inuksiutilirijiit*, who are cultural experts, to support the delivery of traditional knowledge and skills in the school.

(interpretation ends) Finally, while we all want to see the delivery of bilingual education in our schools as soon as possible, we also know that we need to build a strong foundation that will enable us to reach this goal effectively, and as a result, we have proposed a phased implementation approach to the delivery of Inuit Language Arts instruction for grades 4 to 12 that will conclude in 2039. This timeline will ensure that schools are provided the necessary assessments, resources, and training as the Inuit Language Arts curriculum is developed.

Itsivautaaq, the department's Language of Instruction Implementation Plan goes beyond the required commitments proposed in Bill 25. It outlines a 20-year plan to develop made-in-Nunavut

curriculum for all subjects and all grades. The plan includes the development of curriculum, resources, assessments, and educator training.

In the meantime the department has and will continue to deliver Inuit language instruction in Nunavut classrooms, including the use of Inuuqatigiit, the curriculum from the Inuit perspective, because we recognize the importance of protecting and promoting the Inuit language.

I welcome questions and comments from members on this bill before you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. *Ma'na, koana, qujannamiik*, thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Joanasie. Does the Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation have any opening comments? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I wish to make some brief opening comments as the Committee of the Whole begins its consideration of Bill 25, *An Act to Amend the Education Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act*.

The standing committee supports the overall purpose of the bill, which the sponsoring minister described in his opening comments.

(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, one of our principle responsibilities is to oversee the development of legislation, hence the Inuktut term "maligaliuqti," meaning "maker of laws." As members of the Standing Committee on

Legislation, my colleagues and I have a duty to review, revise, and amend as needed the bills introduced by the government. It is a duty that is not always easy to fulfill. For example, the standing committee was initially pressured to (interpretation ends) reject Bill 25 in its entirety. However, our duty required us not to rush to judgment. Instead, our job was to properly scrutinize the proposed legislation to ensure that it will meet the needs of our constituents and our territory.

(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, this standing committee has put a ton of work into Bill 25. If you don't believe me, here are the documents you can read in regard to Bill 25. It was complex work. (interpretation ends) One of our first steps after the bill was introduced was to put out a call for written submissions. A number of written submissions were received from individuals and organizations, which the committee reviewed with care. Committee members posed many questions to the Department of Education in order to determine the bill's potential impact. Many, many hours of meetings, discussions and debate have been held since this bill was introduced.

Iksivautaaq, the extent to which Nunavummiut, stakeholders, parents, students, and others have expressed their views on the bill clearly demonstrates the importance of Nunavut's education system to Nunavummiut.

In November 2019 the standing committee conducted a four-day televised hearing on Bill 25, with participation from not only key stakeholders but also from the sponsoring minister, something that has

never been done before in our territory. During the hearing, a number of issues with respect to Bill 25 and the implementation of the proposed legislation were debated by those who appeared before the committee.

(interpretation) I would like to take this opportunity to again thank Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Nunavut Teachers Association, the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities, individual district education authorities, Nunavut's Languages Commissioner, and others for their participation in this process. Without their contributions, this bill would have been weaker than it now stands.

(interpretation ends) There are a number of key issues which the standing committee has identified through its scrutiny of Bill 25 which I would like to bring to your attention.

First, the training, recruitment, and retention of Inuit and Inuktitut-language speaking teachers will be critical to the success of this legislation. Bill 25 sets timelines for delivering bilingual education across all grades in all schools across Nunavut. *Iksivautaaq*, this will only happen if those teachers are there to deliver the curriculum. Although this legislation does not address teacher employment, this will be a key factor in its successful implementation. Meeting recruitment and retention targets will depend on qualified high school graduates entering the field of education, the successful delivery of Nunavut Arctic College's Teacher Education Program, and a robust recruitment, employment and retention strategy from the Department of Education. To put it simply, teachers are the muscles which

perform the physical work of educating our students, while the legislation, the curriculum, and the system managers are the skeleton, the brains, the nerves, and the organs. Without the muscles, there is little or no movement forward.

(interpretation) Second, the standing committee wishes to stress that the curriculum to be delivered by Nunavut's education system must meet its mandated role to promote fluency in the Inuit language and be culturally relevant to Inuit.

Mr. Chairman, (interpretation ends) often in legislation there are sections which say the minister 'may' do something, while other sections say the minister 'shall' do something. On the important issue of delivering an education program which promotes fluency in the Inuit language, Bill 25 says the curriculum 'shall' do so. It will be up to Members of the Legislative Assembly and the people of Nunavut to hold the ministry to account on that point as we move forward.

(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, the proposed timeline listed within the Schedule of Bill 25, with respect to delivering Inuit language instruction, was identified by many as a major issue. The standing committee took these concerns to heart and deliberated at length on this part of the proposed legislation. Members recognized that there are strong expectations from Nunavummiut in this area and there is a very real fear of language loss and the feeling that we are running out of time.

(interpretation ends) Standing committee members also recognized that teaching the Inuit language and providing

instruction in any number of subjects in the Inuktitut language will require not just a fully developed curriculum, but also relevant and adequate resources, training for those delivering the instruction, and appropriate assessments for determining whether teaching objectives are being achieved. *Iksivautaaq*, developing curriculum, resources, training, and assessments will take time. Recognizing that it is not enough to simply pick deadlines out of the air, one big question the committee considered was whether the proposed timelines were realistic and achievable.

The Department of Education shared with the committee its Language of Instruction Implementation Plan, which includes a number of timelines for the development of the ingredients needed to deliver Inuit language instruction at all grades within our education system. The standing committee understands that this implementation plan is a living document which will be updated to more closely align with the language of instruction delivery deadlines mandated in the new legislation.

Third, the standing committee addressed the issue which is commonly referred to as "Social Promotion" and has been a great concern to Members of the Legislative Assembly for some time.

The Department of Education's approach to "Continuous Progress," whereby students move from grade to grade without necessarily having achieved grade level objectives, has been addressed on many occasions in this House. (interpretation) Mr. Chairman, many Nunavummiut have expressed concerns regarding the true quality of education received by Nunavut students

and especially by those who graduate from Nunavut's schools.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, on this issue, I would like to note that amendments have been made to the bill which will require the minister to report in detail on the placement, promotion and retention of students as they pass from grade to grade through our education system. This information, which has never been before shared with legislators, will be required on an annual basis. It is the committee's hope that this data will allow for a greater level of transparency with respect to student achievement. It will be up to future Members of the Legislative Assembly to monitor these reports, to address the published results on an ongoing basis, and to determine whether there have been changes to the status quo.

Iksivautaaq, success in the implementation of this new legislation and the delivery of a comprehensive and high-quality education program across Nunavut will require a great deal of resources. For this legislation to work, to achieve the desired outcome of improving student success, and to adequately prepare our youth for their future in our society, our government must sustain its focus and investment in all facets of Nunavut's education system, and partners will need to work together. Our district education authorities will need to be supported in offering enhancements to the education programs in their schools, whether they be land-based, cultural activities, or career focused trades programming. The Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities will need to fulfill their role within the education system with the increased resources they've been

allocated through this bill.

Iksivautaaq, future Ministers of Education will need to be staunch champions of their ministry while future Members of the Legislative Assembly will need to hold them accountable.

(interpretation) I would like to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the current Minister of Education and to his staff for their ongoing willingness to provide additional information and resources to assist the committee in its deliberations during the consideration of Bill 25.

(interpretation ends) Finally, Mr. Chairman, I note that section 202.1 of the legislation provides that every five years after its coming into force, the Legislative Assembly or a committee of the Legislative Assembly shall review the provisions and operations of this Act. This review shall include an examination of the administration and implementation of the Act, the effectiveness of its provisions, and the achievement of its objectives and may include recommendations for changes to the Act. The review will be an opportunity to evaluate the success of the new legislation and to continue to make improvements as necessary.

(interpretation) The committee wishes to emphasize that while future improvements to Nunavut's *Education Act* will be possible, the piece of legislation we are addressing today will put our education system on a stronger foundation than what currently exists.

With that, the standing committee recommends the passage of Bill 25 to all members. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Bill 25 was a very difficult bill to review. As some of my colleagues will recall I was a Member of the Legislative Assembly's very first Special Committee to review the Education Act which presented its final report in November of 2015.

I also sat on the Fourth Assembly Standing Committee on Legislation which review bill 37, the Department's first attempt to address the much needed changes to the legislation which governs our education system.

Mr. Chairman, experience has shown me that this is a bill that could never really satisfy anyone. It is a bill which addresses an area which impacts all of us deeply and personally. Many of us have children or grandchildren who attend the very schools that we are talking about today.

For many of us our options, opportunities and careers have been determined by the level of education that we receive.

Mr. Chairman, this bill may not immediately meet everyone's expectations and aspirations. However, we must allow time for the legislation to be implemented and to achieve results in due course.

There are provisions in the legislation that provide for reviews in the future. There will be opportunities to make improvements and to continue refining the delivery of Nunavut's education

system.

Following our review of Bill 25, the Standing Committee worked hard to include amendments which will require the Department of Education to enhance its accountability on delivering an effective education system by reporting on various measures of student achievement.

There are areas in Bill 25 which will strengthen the ability of communities to deliver enhanced local education programs in support of the local dialect, the culture, or economy and to address the learning priorities of the students and parents in that community.

The minister will be required to provide support for these enhances local education programs. Bill 25 will also increase the role and staffing for the Coalition of the Nunavut District Education Authorities to assist District Education Authorities in meeting their obligations.

Bill 25 incorporates many important improvements in Nunavut's education legislation. Although I do recognize that it does not provide everything that some of our constituents wanted or hoped for.

Mr. Chairman, Bill 25 may not be perfect but it is a good start to addressing many of the areas of concern that have been identified in our current education system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Any more general comments? Mr. Kaerner. Go ahead Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish a good day to

the minister and his officials. Yes, Bill 25 the *Education Act*, it was very difficult to think of amendments as members. When the Standing Committee reviewed this bill, we always had questions and kept delaying it and delaying it. We gave questions and amendments, as the Chair mentioned, the amendments, the education minister gave us and said yes to the improvements in November of last year when we had hearings in this room.

I have never have seen a review of Bill of 25 done. It was very challenging, yes. The amendments that's needed for Bill 25 is to be passed, we were told that a review would be done every five years and review the improvement. That is where they have the opportunity; even Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated or the district education authorities will have good opportunities if the bill is passed.

Also, what is currently being proposed by the Department of Education did not have anything on the Inuit language. When the Bill 25 was being reviewed in Nunavut, yes, there is room for improvements but as I stated earlier there will be room for improvement even though like you said it is not perfect and we are always learning through what is passed in the Assembly. When we were reviewing this, our students on the issue of language and the Inuit employment plans, perhaps it's not perfect.

However, this is a piece of Nunavut-made legislation. If we look at it from that side with the people of Nunavut when we are representing our constituents, you will always have an opportunity when as members we review Bills. We also make improvements even though it's difficult. The education

system in Nunavut and we are trying to improve and tries to deal with Nunavummiut as equals. For example, with social advancement, when they try to enter the arctic college or when they try to go to university, their writing ability is always the lowest.

As I am saying this, Mr. Chairman, I myself also how we can make it better for our Nunavummiut, I don't know yet because this is still not legislation, but I am proud of the education minister and his staff when we kept delaying it to get more information they were patient.

As I saying this, I would like to restate that please remember that Inuit organizations for example Nunavut Tunngavik Board of Directors that you would have to be able to think about when it is being reviewed. Concerning our students and the teachers, we'll have more authority if the bill was to be passed. I just wanted to say that and thank you this opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you for the people attending.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kaerner. General comments. The next name on my list: Mr. Lightstone. Go ahead, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister and your officials, welcome. Bill 25 is probably one of the most important pieces of legislation that has come before our Standing Committee on Legislation and will likely be the [largest] piece of legislation throughout the duration of our term.

This 50-page bill has taken us on a 17-month journey which includes countless hours of review and thousands and

thousands of pages of reading material.

When the bill was first introduced I, myself was equally as shocked with the timelines, as were the general public, but we have continued our deliberations I've come to realize that the timelines that were presented are achievable and realistic.

Major barriers to Inuit language of instruction will be addressed through the department's plans in the documents provided to us one year ago on a televised hearing on the plans to develop curriculum as well as assessment and other necessary resources.

Up until recently, I had one outstanding item which was of major concern to me. That was the teacher aspect of the bill. The bilingual teachers which will be required to roll out the phased implementation and upon reading the department's master Inuit employment plan I feel that the department will be in a good position to meet these requirements.

It's identified the department will require a total of 443 bilingual teachers which is roughly 300 more than we have today. However, given the proposed amendments to the Teacher Education Program, so as the increasing rates of graduates across the territory, I do have confidence in the minister's ability in achieving these timelines and objectives.

Although the timelines are lengthy and in anyone's eyes a 20-year timeline is lengthy but, especially when it is compared to the previous *Education Act* which had an ambitious 10-year timeline. Some might say it was overly ambitious and is probably part of the

reason why we are in the position we are in today.

The previous *Education Act* was ambitious and unrealistic and unachievable and I believe that this current *Education Act* is the opposite. If anything I believe there might be bit of breathing room within the proposed timelines but that can be expected.

Mr. Chairman, I have spent countless hours reviewing this bill and discussing it with my colleagues and special interest groups and other individuals who were invited. Now that I have had sufficient time to review all of the materials, I do feel confident in passing this bill. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Any more general comments? Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, minister and your officials.

I was elected last year in October. It turned out to be when the work began on this bill. When I first became involved in the work on the bill, I didn't really approve of it while we were reviewing the submissions we received from different organizations, the district education authorities, and the general public. As the standing committee, we carefully scrutinized the submissions and we tried to treat every submission equally, but it's hard to please everyone. We tried to keep it somewhere in the middle based on what we heard from witnesses and their submissions.

Now, there are several goals for Inuit to become teachers and there are goals for

Inuktitut curriculum development. This started before COVID-19 existed. It's impossible to know if COVID-19 will subside or if it's going to get worse. We don't know that. If there are no barriers caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, then I think the plan that the Department of Education made will go ahead as the minister presented it. In addition, students that are starting off in school and daycares in schools are mentioned in the bill. There's a good future that was set for the students who will go to school. They're going to be in a better situation than we were when we went to school.

I'll stop here, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make a comment on this matter. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qamaniq. General comments? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I would like to move a motion to report progress. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. You would like to or you're making one? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize. I move a motion to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. There's a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please

escort the witnesses out and I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Good evening. Continuing on. No. 20. (interpretation ends) Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Rumbolt.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 25, *An Act to Amend the Education Act and the Inuit Language Protection Act*, and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Simailak. The motion is in order. (interpretation ends) To the motion.

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

Speaker (interpretation): All those in favour. Opposed. (interpretation ends) The motion is carried.

(interpretation) Third Reading of Bills. 22. (interpretation ends) *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Orders of the Day* for November 5:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements

3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 25
20. Report of the Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

adjourned until Thursday, November 5, 2020, at 10 a.m.

(interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>House adjourned at 17:13

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.
(interpretation ends) This House stands

