

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Allan Rumbolt

(Sanikiluaq)

Hon. David Akeegok

(Quttiktuq)

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

Tony Akoak

(Gjoa Haven)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak

(Cambridge Bay)

*Minister of Community and Government
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Energy Corporation*

Hon. George Hickey

(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

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

Hon. David Joanasie

(South Baffin)

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

Joelie Kaerner

(Amittuq)

Pauloosie Keyootak

(Uqqummiut)

Hon. Lorne Kusugak

(Rankin Inlet South)

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

Adam Lightstone

(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

John Main

(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(Pangnirtung)

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

Patterk Netser

(Aivilik)

Calvin Pedersen

(Kugluktuk)

David Qamaniq

(Tununiq)

Emiliano Qirngnuq

(Netsilik)

Hon. Joe Savikataaq

(Arviat South)

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

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(Baker Lake)

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik

(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Tuesday, September 14, 2021

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Mr. Tony Akoak, Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak, Hon. George Hickey, Hon. David Joanase, Mr. Joeline Kaerner, Mr. Pauloosie Keyootak, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr. John Main, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Mr. Patterk Netser, Mr. Calvin Pedersen, Mr. David Qamaniq, Mr. Emiliano Qirngnuq, Hon. Allan Rumbolt, Hon. Joe Savikataaq, Mr. Craig Simailak, Ms. Cathy Towtongie.

>>*House commenced at 13:29*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Allan Rumbolt): Mr. Simailak, if you could please lead us in prayer.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Simailak. Good afternoon, members. I say “good afternoon” to the people of Nunavut. Good afternoon to the people of Sanikiluaq and my condolences to the Cookie family today.

Orders of the day. Ministers’ Statements. The Hon. Minister for the Department of Environment, Minister Savikataaq.

Item 2: Ministers’ Statements

Minister’s Statement 682 – 5(2): Renewable Energy Support Program

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

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Renewable Energy Support Program will be launched this fall. This program supports homeowners and cabin owners in accessing funds to install renewable energy systems.

My department has developed both the Renewable Energy Cabin Grant and the Renewable Energy Homeowners Grant, the latter in partnership with the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

These programs will allow for individual climate change action to reduce fossil fuel use within the territory, with cabin owners eligible for up to \$5,000 for solar or wind systems, and homeowners eligible for up to \$30,000 for solar systems.

Mr. Speaker, the Renewable Energy Support Program aligns with the Government of Nunavut’s support of the development and expansion of renewable energy usage in the territory.

I am excited to be able to offer this program to Nunavummiut. The Department of Environment and Nunavut Housing Corporation are looking forward to receiving applications when the program launches later this fall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Thank you. Ministers' Statements. The Hon. Minister responsible for Community and Government Services, Minister Ehaloak.

Minister's Statement 683 – 5(2): Telecommunications Infrastructure

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Good afternoon to my colleagues and those who are watching today.

Uqaqtii, it is with pleasure that I rise today to inform members of some of the achievements Community and Government Services has delivered on during the mandate of this government.

As part of the government's mandate, we have committed to investing in telecommunications to improve broadband services throughout the territory for the social and economic well-being of Nunavummiut by investing in affordable and reliable Internet. I am happy to report that the Department of Community and Government Services is now in the procurement phase of the Katittuq Nunavut Fibre project to enhance broadband capacity. We are taking steps to secure additional federal funding that will continue to lay the foundation to improve connectivity in the Nunavut communities.

Increasing the broadband capacity is at the heart of our telecommunication's strategy to enhance the provision of critical services throughout the territory. Without reliable and affordable high-speed broadband services, technology cannot be modernized. Improvements to services and delivery will remain limited, affecting all our communities.

The department is demonstrating our commitment to improving telecommunications infrastructure by bringing rightful services to all Nunavummiut. We are leveraging a hybrid of technologies, including the emerging technology of low-Earth orbit satellites, in addition to our existing satellites, for those communities where high-speed fibre is not currently feasible.

Mr. Speaker, Community and Government Services will continue to work with our partners to optimize and expand our existing telecommunications infrastructure throughout the territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister responsible for the Department of Education, Minister Joanasie.

Minister's Statement 684 – 5(2): Educational Resources Development with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, members and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, to ensure that Inuit language, identity, and culture continues to thrive for future generations, Nunavummiut must work together to share their knowledge in ways that are relevant and engaging to children and youth.

I am pleased to tell you that on June 4, 2021 the Department of Education and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association signed a memorandum of understanding to create educational resources grounded in Inuit culture and language. Together we will create important and engaging resources for infants, preschool-aged children, kindergarten to grade 12 students, and adult learners in Nunavut, in the spirit of Piliriqatigiinniġ/Ikajuġtigiinniġ.

Mr. Speaker, this memorandum of understanding strengthens the existing relationship between my department and the Qikiqtani Inuit Association on work that is already underway on shared and complementary educational resource development projects. The memorandum of understanding affirms our mandates and specific responsibilities with respect to the development, production, and distribution of educational resources.

The Department of Education is committed to working with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association to ensure that educational programs and resources promote Inuit language and culture for the benefit of all Nunavut students and communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. Ministers' Statements. The Hon. Minister responsible for the Department of Health, Minister Kusugak.

Minister's Statement 685 – 5(2): Care Closer to Home

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, as well as Nunavummiut, especially the people of Rankin Inlet.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health is committed to helping Nunavummiut access medical services and programs closer to home. Over the past year there have been several developments that have furthered or will further this important goal.

Mr. Speaker, in mental health and addictions, the Department of Health has added new programs, enhanced its facilities, and is working toward the completion of a major infrastructure project that will improve care and access for all Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the “Healing by Talking” program, which provides NIHB clients access to in-territory counselling, was launched in January and has seen enormous success. The program, which provides Nunavummiut access to responsive mental health services, had 84 referrals since January.

Mr. Speaker, the completion of two new health centre buildings in Kinngait and Sanikiluaq has also helped us make strides toward improving care in our communities.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: These state-of-the-art facilities will enhance patient access, improve staff working environments, and accommodate community growth.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, two major infrastructure projects in the works, the Rankin Inlet Long-Term Care Centre and the Nunavut Recovery Centre, will be two significant additions to Nunavummiut’s options for care closer to home.

Mr. Speaker, the new 24-bed long-term care facility, scheduled to be completed in 2023, will allow Nunavut to provide more advanced care to our clients. It will also provide Nunavummiut the opportunity to age closer to home, where family members can be actively involved in an elder’s care and support.

>>Applause

Mr. Speaker, the Nunavut Recovery Centre will bring both clinical and culturally relevant healing practices to addictions treatment in Nunavut. The integration of on-the-land healing, clinical counselling and Inuit-led programming will greatly increase the chances of success for Nunavummiut recovering from problematic substance use.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health is also working on a first step toward bringing dialysis options to the territory. We are currently undertaking a review to determine which forms of dialysis may be viable to be offered in Nunavut. Mr. Speaker, offering an option for dialysis in territory may bring Nunavummiut home or greatly reduce the need to travel south for care on a regular basis.

Mr. Speaker, my department is continuously working toward providing more options for care in Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Thank you. Ministers’ Statements. The Hon. Minister for Culture and Heritage, Minister Nakashuk.

Minister's Statement 686 – 5(2): Language Training Function Transfer

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. I say “good afternoon” to my colleagues. First of all, I wish a happy birthday to Christina Aningmiuq and Skyler Sheppard, who are celebrating their birthday today, as well as Ooleepika Ishulutak. I hope they have a wonderful day.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Culture and Heritage has worked closely with the Department of Human Resources to identify ways to improve the delivery of language training programs for Government of Nunavut employees. I am pleased to announce today that the language training function has been officially transferred from the Department of Human Resources to the Department of Culture and Heritage.

Mr. Speaker, our departments will continue to work together to ensure a smooth transition. My department, in practising Piliqatigiinni and Aajiqatigiingniq, will engage Government of Nunavut departments and agencies, Inuit organizations, and external stakeholders to create a strategic plan to deliver comprehensive language training programs.

As outlined in the Inuunivut priority area of our government's *Turaaqtavut* mandate, our government is committed to enabling Inuktitut to be the working language of the public service. This transfer represents a step toward improving the delivery of language training. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Minister Ehaloak.

Minister's Statement 687 – 5(2): Four Major Project Approvals

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) After consultation with the Utility Rates Review Council, I am pleased to say four major project permits for the Qulliq Energy Corporation were recently approved to proceed to the planning stage, pending approval of the budget by the Government of Nunavut. Three power plant replacements are expected to be completed in Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven, and Igloolik in 2026. A generator set upgrade is also expected to be installed at the Iqaluit power plant by 2024.

New power plants and upgraded equipment provide improved reliability for our valued customers. While newer energy efficient technologies serve the long-term energy needs of our growing communities, they also aim to reduce the territory's environmental impact by displacing diesel consumption through fuel efficiency. Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven, and Igloolik will also be the newest additions among seven other communities with modern power system technologies that will make incorporating renewable energy easier in the future. These steps bring Nunavut closer to a cleaner energy future.

During this year's construction season, the Qulliq Energy Corporation made progress with three other major projects across the territory. The new Arctic Bay Power Plant, expected to be completed next year, saw the installation of key electrical generation equipment over the summer. Design work for the new power plant and solar installation in Kugluktuk is also progressing. Superstructure construction has begun for Baker Lake's Qulliq Energy Corporation head office. This project will accommodate all local administrative staff in one building and is also expected to be completed next year.

I would like to take a moment to thank the Qulliq Energy Corporation for their hard work and dedication in moving these projects forward to ensure that Nunavummiut across the territory have a reliable power supply. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Item 3. Members' Statements. The Hon. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Qirngnuq.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 988 – 5(2): Congratulations to the 2021 Graduates of Arviligjuaq Ilinniarnvik

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my warmest congratulations to the 2021 graduates of Arviligruaq Ilinniarnvik in Kugaaruk.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation to the teachers, principal, and families of our graduates. They play an essential role in supporting our youth on their educational journeys.

I congratulate the following graduates:

- Julie Ann Anaittuq
- Veronica Anaittuq
- Michael Ihakkaq
- Sheena Kayasark
- David Riley Krejunark
- Victoria Niptayuk
- Jackie Sanertanut

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all of our graduates to continue on their path of lifelong learning. I know the community of Kugaaruk is very proud.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating the graduates on their achievement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. Members' Statements. The Hon. Member for Uqqummiut, Mr. Keyootak.

Member's Statement 989 – 5(2): Elder Designated Housing

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to those who are following the proceedings in Qikiqtarjuaq and Clyde River, as well as my colleagues.

I rise today to again raise this question about the need for elders facilities in our communities, of which we have a deficit in both available facilities and workers to look after our elders housed in these elders facilities. They currently have to do their own household chores such as cleaning due to the lack of workers to support them.

This is particularly true and is a concern held by the community of Clyde River, one of my constituency communities where the elders' duplex was to be renovated because it was a concern expressed by residents of the units in the community.

Often many of the houses are not complete in terms of renovations and as the elders age, they continue to encounter more hardships, as not much care is being provided to them. There are some very steep and high stairways leading into their housing, which poses a problem, especially as the elders' mobility continues to decline.

I have raised this issue many times and asked pointed questions about the elders facility in Clyde River, emphasizing that more repairs need to be done, and more care needs to be provided to those elders, especially those that do not have much family support. Often these elders are not prioritized for attention.

At the appropriate time, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the question to the minister regarding the elders facilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Members' Statements. The Hon. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Netser.

Member's Statement 990 – 5(2): 2021 High School Graduates of Coral Harbour

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to you all, including my fellow residents and all Nunavummiut.

Regretfully I was not able to attend the local graduation ceremony the other day. My younger brother was travelling to Rankin Inlet by boat and required my assistance, so I was not able to make it to Coral Harbour, and I apologize for that.

There were a large number of students that finished high school and completed grade 12, and I would like to recognize them. They were:

- Ossian Ottokie
- Candace Saviakjuk
- Harrison Saviakjuk
- Gail Gibbons
- Diana Netser
- Leonie Netser
- Patrick Kataluk
- Zoey Duffy
- Isaiah Emiktowt
- Kyshton Kalai
- Owen Angootealuk
- Cassidy Kadlak
- Dakota Pameolik
- Miyah Pudlat
- Arcene Kolit-Matoo
- Moses Jr. Nakoolak

These young people are completing their education and we are very proud of that. It looks good for our future that more students are completing their high school education and choosing to advance their education further. We are very proud of them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. Members' Statements. The Hon. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Member's Statement 991 – 5(2): Removal of Natural Fur from Canada Goose Products

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to express my deep disappointment with the recent announcement that Canada Goose will be removing natural fur from their products by the year 2022.

On June 24, 2021, Canada Goose committed to removing natural fur from their products, stating that they will stop using all fur by the end of 2021 and cease manufacturing with fur by 2022.

An Hon. Member: Right now.

Ms. Towtongie: Mr. Speaker, in their announcement, they claim: “This is significant step forward toward building a more humane and sustainable world.” I cannot disagree with this more.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Ms. Towtongie: It is messaging like this that harms the indigenous harvesting industry. Hunting and trapping provides our community with the materials to keep us warm, and provides us with healthy and nutritious foods that are not always accessible in our stores, all of you hunters out there.

Mr. Speaker, Inuit have a right to harvest and that right is protected by the *Nunavut Agreement*. Inuit have always coexisted in harmony with the land; we continue to rely on what the land has to offer. We have been able to survive the harshest climates by hunting sustainably and making use of all the materials provided.

Mr. Speaker, when a large corporation has a large platform and their marketing takes advantage of Inuit and the north, I believe they have a responsibility to promote and help protect the indigenous ways of life. I believe they have the responsibility to teach their consumers the importance of harvesting for Inuit and why we will continue to use furs.

Mr. Speaker, Canada Goose claims that “Canada Goose was born in the North and for generations we have been inspired by its people, communities, and landscapes.”

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

Speaker: Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her member’s statement. Are there any nays? Being none, please continue, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, up until the announcement that the company was removing natural fur from their products, Canada Goose and Inuit worked well together. In fact the company has collaborated with Inuit on a number of occasions.

Mr. Speaker, in [2009] they established the “Canada Goose Resource Centre” program, which distributed the excess materials from the company to communities in Nunavut. Those are your wives, the seamstresses.

Mr. Speaker, in 2019 Canada Goose launched “Project Atigi.” It was collaboration with 18 renowned Inuit designers and seamstresses from four Inuit regions: Inuvialuit, Nunatsiavut, Nunavut, and Nunavik. All of the proceeds went to Inuit Tapiriit of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, many Inuit, including myself, are upset to see a large Canadian company turn its back on us. We know how this will impact our local economy. Until recently, Canada Goose supported the sustainable and culturally appropriate use of fur.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that Canada Goose consider how their announcement and I especially believe our Minister of Environment should say that messaging will affect the indigenous harvesting industry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. Members' Statements. The Hon. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Member's Statement 992 – 5(2): Digital Resources for Students

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to my constituents in Baker Lake.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my appreciation to the students and their parents from all across Nunavut, as well as the teachers, principals and staff, who have faced major challenges in continuing their education throughout this COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, I do recognize that the threat of the virus still hangs over us. It is important that we remain vigilant, aware, and prepared.

Mr. Speaker, school has resumed in communities across the territory, with Baker Lake starting up in the middle of August. While many students are keen to get back to learning and more regular interactions with their peers, there will be some changes in how they approach their school work and how they get it done.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the efforts of the Department of Education to give our students the tools and resources they need to continue their education during these difficult times.

As you will recall, the minister made a commitment to ensure that students in the higher grade levels had access to computers, laptops, and iPads in order for them to undertake remote learning.

As my colleagues will also recall, when we last met I encouraged the government to reach out to private entities, local businesses, and others for additional supports and resources.

I am very pleased that a certain individual stepped up to the plate. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Mr. Paul Summers of Steelcraft Incorporated for donating 13 Dell laptops to the Baker Lake high school students. This is a very real example of encouraging our youth to continue with their education in these difficult times. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. Members' Statements. The Hon. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerk.

Member's Statement 993 – 5(2): Aircraft Cold Weather Testing in Sanirajak

Mr. Kaernerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, people of Igloodik and Sanirajak, my fellow residents of Amittuq and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make a statement about airport upgrade funding the Nunavut government received, but realized two years have quickly lapsed since the federal government approved the initial funding of almost \$10 million. The projects were continued despite COVID measures and the planned upgrades were completed. I would like to thank the federal government for listening to this request and our requirements transportation-wise.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to suggest a way how the Department of Transportation, GN, can study air transportation routes to benefit the Amittuq region, perhaps under economic development in Sanirajak. Going back to 1980, which kind of dates me, jet service was provided, which was very convenient and other communities benefited from this jet service. I tried to outline previously as residents of Qikiqtaaluk, we're located in the middle of Nunavut. We're just south of the High Arctic. We're also adjacent to the Kivalliq and Kitikmeot, our next-door neighbour.

On the issue of airline transportation, perhaps this coming winter, we may see many aircraft here in Iqaluit for cold weather testing. Can the Minister of Transportation seek ways to progress this further for the residents of Amittuq to also benefit from this testing and how to resume scheduled jet services? I will raise this as a question at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Members' Statements. The Hon. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Member's Statement 994 – 5(2): Encouraging All Nunavummiut to get the COVID-19 Vaccine

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to make a statement regarding the coronavirus pandemic.

Keeping in mind the people of Nunavut, in Whale Cove, Arviat and all other Nunavummiut, and in caring for them all, I am of the mind that we still need to ensure more residents are provided access to the vaccine. We have many residents who are now vaccinated, yet we still need a lot more to do so, Mr. Speaker.

I wish to speak about my own lived experience. Mr. Speaker, when COVID impacted our community of Arviat last winter and about a year ago now, an infected person came into our residence. I still love them, but many of my closest loved ones got sick. As a father and husband, it is very scary and stressful to undergo that, Mr. Speaker. It was personally difficult for me.

I thought and felt that I should have done a lot more and I was remorseful and felt if I had been more proactive and guarded, then this COVID-19 sickness would not have entered our home, but it was already inside our house, so I began to get very regretful. This was an extremely hard experience to have to go through for the family I love.

Yes, everyone heals from their infirmities, but we have others who died from COVID. This is not a game. COVID is not a game. Some people think it's just a joke and we find Facebook posts that it's not to be scared of, but it's not true.

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

Speaker: Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his member's statement. Are there any nays? Being none, please continue, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, fellow members.

COVID is real. We cannot see it physically, but it affects those that we see. Mr. Speaker, I have attended funerals because of COVID. Yes, a person was walking around just recently in Nunavut, in our community and now is in the ground. To those who say COVID is not serious, this is very spiteful, especially for those who have experienced it. Arviat residents and others in Nunavut know that this is a very important issue.

If we look ahead as winter looms, we don't know how the months will be like for us. Back when COVID-19 came to our home, there were no vaccines in 2020. Now we have the vaccines available which will safeguard my friends and family. It's okay. Vaccine is waiting. Parents, elders, those whom you love, your children, your family members, elders, if you want them to be okay, get vaccinated.

I'm not a fan of vaccines on some occasions and sometimes I tend to black out or, in English, become (interpretation ends) faint (interpretation) when I get a shot on my arm with a needle. It's unpleasant to be given a shot, but remember your elders and your loved ones and ensure you get vaccinated. Yes, this may be one of the fears, but the fear you have is something you should forget about and focus on your family and loved ones.

The experience I had last year is something I don't want Nunavut residents to undergo. Mr. Speaker, I would encourage Nunavut residents to get vaccinated so they won't be in an unfortunate state. (interpretation ends) To my fellow Nunavut residents, if you have not gotten your vaccine yet, please do it so that you will not feel the regret, you will not

feel the pain if that COVID virus comes into your home because, if it does, you will ask yourself, “What could I have done?”

(interpretation) The experience that I went through was very unpleasant and many of my fellow residents of Nunavut also experienced horrible situations too due to COVID. I encourage you to get vaccinated. The vaccines are available. Talk with health officials if you have not been vaccinated. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. Members’ Statements. The Hon. Member for Tununiq, Mr. Qamaniq.

Member’s Statement 995 – 5(2): Recognizing Elijah Panipakoocho

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) I say “good afternoon” to my fellow residents of Pond Inlet and my colleagues.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize elder Elijah Panipakoocho of Pond Inlet.

Elijah was born on April 3, 1944 and was a young child and his mother carried him in her amauti when the ship named the “St. Roch,” unlike the failed Franklin expedition, was the first to successfully navigate the Northwest Passage in a single season.

Mr. Speaker, I understand Elijah to be the last Inuk alive today who was in Pond Inlet when the St. Roch departed the community en route to Herschel Island on August 3, 1944.

Mr. Speaker, the St. Roch had stopped in Pond Inlet to recruit Inuit to help assist its crew on the expedition.

The late Joe Panipakuttuk, a respected hunter, and his step-son Aariak assisted as guides and hunters, Joe’s mother, Panikpak, and his wife, Letia, assisted as seamstresses. They were also accompanied by Joe’s three children and niece.

Mr. Speaker, Joe and his family returned from Herschel Island to Pond Inlet over the course of two years, travelling by dog team and a sailing ship.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we remember the Inuit who played key roles in our collective history.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the good work done at the Pond Inlet Achieves and Library Society. I thank them for the role they play in preserving our rich histories.

We remember Joe Panipakuttuk and his family for their valuable contributions to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and for successfully navigating the Northwest Passage in a single season. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. Members' Statements. The Hon. Member for Gjoa Haven, Mr. Akoak.

Member's Statement 996 – 5(2): Progress on Mental Health

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to you all. Good afternoon to the community of Gjoa Haven and my family watching. Just a few more days left before I head home. I say a big “hello” to my biggest supporter, my wife, Annie Akoak.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This last sitting of the Fifth Assembly would not be complete if I did not take this one last opportunity to call for more progress in addressing the mental health issues in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that there are many factors affecting mental health: the lack of employment opportunities; the high cost of affordable food; problems with addiction and substance abuse; historical traumas; and the lack of housing and homelessness are just a few of them.

Mr. Speaker, I believe we have all felt the pressures and stresses of carrying on our lives during this pandemic. It has been taking its toll.

Mr. Speaker, in June this Assembly passed Nunavut's new *Mental Health Act*. Although I was pleased to hear that the government plans to provide even more mental health resources and supports at the community level, it was not clear to me how or when that is going to be achieved.

Meanwhile, people are suffering. Their suffering puts even more stress on those who struggle to support them as well as their other family members.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that the government's strategy for addressing mental health issues should also include the establishment of Nunavut-based mental health facilities. As I have noted in the past, a community like Gjoa Haven, which has demonstrated that it can support and operate such a facility as the continuing care centre, would be a good location for such a facility.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Speaker: Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his member's statement. Are there any nays? Being none, please continue, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, my colleagues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll just repeat it again.

As I have noted in the past, a community like Gjoa Haven, which has demonstrated that it can support and operate such a facility as the continuing care centre, would be a good location for such a facility.

Mr. Speaker, it is my sincere hope that Nunavut's Sixth Assembly will keep mental health as a priority for services, resources, and staff who are well-trained and culturally sensitive.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to the day when it will not be necessary for MLAs like me to rise at every sitting of the House to address this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. Members' Statements. The Hon. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Member's Statement 997 – 5(2): Clare's Law for Nunavut

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have spoken in this House on a number of occasions during our term of office about the importance of introducing a Clare's Law in Nunavut. As all members are aware, this initiative would be of significant benefit to protecting vulnerable Nunavummiut from the threat of domestic violence and abuse.

Last year in September 2020 I had followed up on the matter of Clare's Law with the former Minister of Justice and I was a little disappointed with the minister's response, as the minister had indicated that as the RCMP have been on record regarding the incompatibility of this type of legislation, Clare's Law, with the existing federal privacy laws. Until such time that the federal government has decided to support Clare's Law, the introduction of this legislation in Nunavut would offer little to no support for vulnerable persons.

Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to state that as of March 2021, the RCMP has amended their regulations to allow disclosure of information under Clare's Law. Mr. Speaker, as it has been a number of months since the RCMP have allowed their own members to conform with Clare's Law and disclose information when it is deemed necessary, I will be following up with the minister today to ask for an update on any progress made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Members' Statements. The Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. Akeeagok.

Member's Statement 998 – 5(2): Reflections on Being an MLA for Quttiktuq

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to thank the people of Quttiktuq for electing me to be a Member of this Assembly.

I will say my proper thank you on Thursday and to my colleagues, I would also like to thank you all for putting me in the cabinet during this term. I was committed to make sure that I carried out my roles and responsibilities.

There will be an election for a representative for the Quttiktuq riding. I am not sure what's going to happen, but I would like to thank you all, as we only have two minutes to make a statement. There are a lot of people that I would like to thank, especially my colleagues, my staff in the Quttiktuq constituency offices, Lori, Susie, Jeremy, and Joelle. I thank them all very much for their support. Additionally, there are also Dorcas, Cindy, Elisapee, Teresa, and Corinne in the office, and Sheila and Jimmy and their staff in our department.

I am the voice representing the people in my riding. I thank you all. I thank all the people who wrote to us and I would like to make sure their correspondence and information is shared between the government and our constituents. I would like to come back, but it's hard to tell what's going to be happening in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. Members' Statements. The Hon. Member for South Baffin, Mr. Joanasie.

Member's Statement 999 – 5(2): Appreciation to the Board of NTI

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to the people of South Baffin.

I rise today to thank the Nunavut Tunngavik Board of Directors for holding their board meeting around the middle of August, prior to September. The Inuit organizations represent the majority of the population in Nunavut and they have full agendas. I would also like to thank the people of Kinngait for welcoming the NTI Board of Directors and following the public health protocols.

Mr. Speaker, even though they didn't host a community feast, Nunavut Tunngavik was able to contribute Inuit country food to the people of Kinngait. On behalf of the people of Kinngait, I would like to say thank you to Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated. It was an appropriate time to see the arts centre in Kinngait. They were all also able to view the marine research vessel Ludy Pudluk. We were offered a tour of the marine research vessel and were able to see how it studies the many different things in the ocean. It was quite impressive and a very enjoyable experience.

I would like to thank Aluki Kotierk, the President of NTI and Vice President James Eetoolook who is originally from Kinngait, and likely lived there longer than I have. Additionally from the Kivalliq, Kono Tattuinee and David Kuksuk participated by Zoom as COVID-19 was active in their area and I thank them for that. Stanley Anablak was able to make it from the Kitikmeot.

Finally, Levi Barnabas and Olayuk Akesuk were representatives I would like to recognize Olayuk Akesuk as the interim President of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association. I thank you once again on behalf of the people of Kinngait. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. Members' Statements. I have no more names on my list. So we move on the orders of the day. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6. Oral Questions. The Honourable Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 1433 – 5(2): Digital Resources for Students

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

One of the Department of Education's commitments for addressing the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic to our education system was to distribute over 5,000 laptops and tablets to Nunavut students so that they could do their school work remotely.

Can the minister provide a clear update on how many devices have been distributed to Nunavut students to date and how many more are yet to be handed out? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. The Hon. Minister of Education, Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. Mr. Speaker, yes, we are committed to supporting remote learning should the need be required for our schools to shift to remote learning.

With that, we have secured over 5,000 digital devices, including Internet capacity. To date we have been able to deploy 1,649 devices across the territory to all schools. That's phase 1 of the deployment. Phase 2, which is ending this month, will see another 1,740 devices being deployed. These are specifically more for the high school students, but also, we are setting aside some devices for classrooms or schools that might be impacted, as the case may be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response; if I can get a bit more detailed information maybe.

Mr. Speaker, on August 30 the minister and President Kotierk of Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated announced that they would be working together to use federal funding to provide an additional 600 Internet-ready digital devices for Nunavut students and teachers.

Can the minister provide an update on this initiative, including a breakdown of how many students have received these devices to date and in which communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank again the member for his question. Mr. Speaker, yes, we were glad to work with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated on securing 600 additional devices, but due to backlog in orders, we do not expect to receive those until December 2021 at the earliest.

However, just to clarify, these devices have been allocated to schools and they're stored should remote learning be implemented. Once a school is closed for instruction, then those devices would be provided to the students that need it. Just clarify on that point and hopefully our students will be most prepared when the time comes, but we're trying to avoid school closures as best we can. Of course with the advice and the recommendation from the Chief Public Health Office, depending on when a community or school is impacted, that's when those devices would be deployed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. Mr. Speaker, the Department of Education released its 2021 *Opening Plan for Nunavut Schools* in early August. The "Learning to be Together Again" component of the plan refers to the Edsby online learning platform in the section on "remote instruction."

Can the minister provide an update on the status of the Edsby online learning platform and how many students are currently able to access the platform remotely with such digital devices as laptops or tablets? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Edsby online platform can be used at any time, when students receive in-class instruction or if they have to do remote learning. Mr. Speaker, I don't have a breakdown of how many students are registered, but each school should be prepared to have all students ready in case they have to shift to online learning; it depends on each school.

Mr. Speaker, we do have resources available to provide whether it's additional training around and be familiar with how to use the Edsby platform, but it's meant to be user-friendly and there is other information made available to schools and parents if they need to understand better how the platform works. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Oral Questions. The Hon. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Pedersen.

Question 1434 – 5(2): Nunavut's Vaccination Requirements

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues and the people of Kugluktuk.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that some variations of this question have been asked during this current sitting, but on these specific ones, I may be looking for more answers.

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

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut's *Public Health Act* received assent in 2016 and came into force in December 2019. Section 85(1)(v) provides that regulations may be made "Respecting disease prevention measures, including immunization of humans."

Can the minister clarify whether Nunavut's *Public Health Regulations* respecting immunizations have been updated since the legislation came into force in 2019 and, if not, when does he anticipate the new regulations will be brought forward? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. The Hon. Minister of Health, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just taking a quick look down my list, I'm not aware if there have been any changes and if we anticipate any changes. I'll have to get back to him with those details. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In some jurisdictions, school boards and education authorities require that students receive specific immunizations before they can attend school. In some jurisdictions, workers in certain fields of employment are required to have specific immunizations as a condition of their employment.

Can the minister clarify whether any immunizations are currently mandatory for any Nunavummiut in any specific demographic or social group? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Again, Mr. Speaker, my colleague, I appreciate the questions are getting pretty specific into the nitty-gritty. I would have to take a look at those as I wouldn't want to not include immunizations that may be mandatory or accidentally include some of those that may not be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for providing future answers. My final supplementary question was going along the lines of the same thing, and I'll just wait until the minister provides answers at a later date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Oral Questions. The Hon. Member for Gjoa Haven, Mr. Akoak.

Question 1435 – 5(2): Progress on Mental Health

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

Mr. Speaker, as you and my colleagues will know by now, I have been a strong supporter of accessing additional services and resources to address mental health needs in Nunavut's communities.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update on what plans are currently in place to increase mental health services and resources across Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. The Hon. Minister of Health, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the questions from my colleague and appreciate his patience and his continuing to ask questions on mental health. It's very important. It's one of the most important topics in this House, I believe.

Mr. Speaker, our department is working with all the communities and community group interests across Nunavut to provide funding because who better than the community to know what kind of programs need to be there to support the youth and elders and their need for mental health support. We have a wide variety of programs eligible for funding under our funding criteria for interest groups and groups out there that are looking to provide programs for their youth and their elders. We have many programs funding radio shows, sewing programs, harvesting programs, learn-to-hunt programs, counselling programs. There's a whole wide variety out there and we encourage all communities to access this kind of funding, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My apologies to the minister for facing the camera and he's sitting on my left side here, so I'm not facing him.

Mr. Speaker, in June this Assembly passed Nunavut's new *Mental Health Act*. While reviewing the proposed legislation, members were given to understand that plans are in place to train and hire over 50 new mental health staff in differing roles and capacities.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide a brief overview of what this mental health workforce will look like once all the positions have been identified and filled? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are trying to fill the positions that are open for mental health services or social services. We mentioned them in the spring session. They are still trying to be filled. All the communities' mental health positions are in the process of being filled and if they can speak Inuktitut, it would be even better. If we were able to fill them with elders who can provide mental health services, we are trying to fill them and this is ongoing.

COVID has slowed down many things here in the last two years and this has been one of the things that have been delayed. It's becoming easier, but I can imagine that the positions for mental health services, if it were to carry forward within the government, I'm looking at elders and younger people who can work in Inuktitut as mental health workers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister and his predecessor will be aware, I have suggested on a number of occasions that consideration should be given to establishing a mental health facility in Nunavut, possibly in a community like Gjoa Haven. Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm that he has considered this suggestion and, if so, will his department continue to plan for such a facility in the future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our department is working on planning to build such a facility. I'll leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Oral Questions. The Hon. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Qirngnuq.

Question 1436 – 5(2): Housing Needs in Taloyoak

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

Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister many questions during the recent spring sitting concerning the cancellation of the construction of new public housing units in Taloyoak.

At that time the minister indicated that problems with the contractor's insurance caused the tender to be cancelled, even though it would have been possible to get insurance. The Legislative Assembly had previously approved funding for the construction of the new units.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister update me today on what specific actions are being taken by the housing corporation to ensure that this problem is addressed and that the tender for new public housing units can be reissued and awarded for next year's construction season? I would like to get an update on that, hence my question, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you. The Hon. Minister of the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. The cancellation was due to the unavailability of insurance to cover their legal insurance requirements for construction, but the two five-plexes which total ten units are still planned for future construction in the upcoming year. This aspect hasn't changed, and actually it was during the summer session we stated it was deferred another year to 2022, when we will put out a request for proposals or (interpretation ends) tender. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for that clarification. It's something to look forward to in the future.

(interpretation ends) As the minister is aware, a number of units in Taloyoak have been destroyed or seriously damaged by fire in recent years. Will the minister commit to ensuring that replacements for these units are added to the community's public housing allocation for the upcoming 2022-23 fiscal year? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. With regard to the fire damaged units, the housing corporation works with the local housing association to decide what they're going to do about that, but there haven't been any decisions made yet. Sometimes when they are going to be replaced right away, we generally ship the material up by sealift, but right now nothing has been decided on the units that he is asking about. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that good news item from the minister. Now, in order to temper the expectations for the upcoming

year and to ensure the housing project is still anticipated next year, it is obvious that housing can be delayed due to many reasons. Lumber prices have increased dramatically this past year, as it too affected our other construction projects and difficulties in completing housing projects in some of our communities.

(interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, I have written her a number of letters concerning the issue of homelessness in Taloyoak.

During last Friday's sitting of the Legislative Assembly, the Minister responsible for Homelessness announced that the government has hired three new "homelessness outreach workers," whose responsibilities include "assisting communities in developing proposals to start a shelter."

Can the minister clarify how the Nunavut Housing Corporation will be working with the Department of Family Services on these initiatives? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking those questions. Now, the money that was announced by the federal government that would be used to help our situation, they will be working with the housing corporation and the Department of Family Services to decide on how they're going to be using that money and what they're going to do for homeless people and people who don't make very much money. That will be worked on for sure. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Oral Questions. The Hon. Member for Uqqummiut, Mr. Keyootak.

Question 1437 – 5(2): Clyde River Elder Facility

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions to the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, in my member's statement I talked about the Clyde River elder facility that was never completed. There was some work started on it, but then they found that it was too difficult to continue.

Now, some of these elder facilities are just not built right for elders. The stairways are very high and the buildings are built very high. When you have a disability or you're an elder, they're almost impossible to live in.

There was some work started on the facility in Clyde River to make some improvements to the entrance stairway, but the work was never completed according to the people who use the building. One of them even wanted to complete the work on their own.

Can the minister explain to us what more has been done in regard to the elder facility that was supposed to be fixed and worked on but was never completed? Can I get an update on that, please? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. The Hon. Minister of the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking more questions about the matter. In regard to the elder facility in Clyde River, this was discussed at the last session. Community-run buildings like that, public housing units, and that building was meant to be like public housing, but then it was changed to an elder facility and we were told that the stairway was too high. Work was done to make it so that it's not at such a high angle. According to the information I have, the work has been done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister further explain if the work has been totally completed or if there is more work that needs to be done on it? Can the minister tell us what else needs to be done to the building? Does more work need to be done on the stairway or different parts of the building? Has that project been completed altogether? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for asking further about the matter. This question started before I became a minister and the fact that the stairway was at such a high angle in the elder facility. According to the information I have, in the letter, the work has been started and the stairway has been corrected. The building sits high, but the high angle of the stairway has been worked on to try to make it more accommodating to elders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Keyootak.

Mr. Keyootak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for explaining that. Mr. Speaker, along the same lines, we talked about the people who live in the elders facility. In Clyde River there are no employees that work there. I know that it is not classed under the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and that the cleaning and maintenance is not the responsibility of Nunavut Housing Corporation.

However, the elders that occupy that building have to do their own cleaning and maintenance, which is very difficult for them. It is a big building and the living room is quite large, which is difficult to keep clean as the elders that live there don't have the best mobility, and some of them are disabled. The minister was supposed to talk with the Department of Health, I believe they are involved.

Has the minister made the Department of Health aware of the situation at the elder facility? I am under the impression that the Department of Health or Family Services; I apologize if I may be wrong, but I thought they were supposed to work together to produce a position for that building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for asking more questions about the matter. I once said that the Department of Human Resources works with the Department of Health when people need more help in homes like that, and if any maintenance work needs to be done on the inside or the outside of it, then we get involved. They inform the Department of Health when they need extra help like cleaning, and if the health centre people need to come and look at the building they ask them to come and look at the building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Oral Questions. The Hon. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Question 1438 – 5(2): Royal Canadian Mounted Police

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Justice.

I strongly support efforts on the part of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to recruit more Inuit into the force. Having more bilingual Inuit in uniform will enhance policing services in our communities.

Earlier this year the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation announced an assisted application training program. This program was scheduled to run for four months in Rankin Inlet and prepare Nunavut Inuit for the rigorous RCMP recruitment process.

Can the minister provide an update on the status of this program and can he confirm how many participants have fully successfully completed the program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The Hon. Minister for Justice, Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try to answer both the member's questions. Unfortunately due to COVID and training, obviously, challenges that have occurred over the last couple of years, the next cohort are not scheduled until 2022. That being said, out of the 13 participants in the last cohort, 10 did pass. Unfortunately two have looked at other employment opportunities and have subsequently dropped out, so there are still eight remaining successful completions. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister for your response. I also support efforts on behalf of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to provide appropriate orientation and cultural sensitivity training to officers who are new to Nunavut and our Inuit way of life.

As the minister is aware, his department's current business plan indicates that "The RCMP is committed to delivering Indigenous Cultural Competency training and other trauma informed training for members, civilian and public service employees." This means "This training will provide information that is critical in ensuring non-Inuit members understand, and are sensitive to, Inuit culture and realities to ensure the safety for both public and officer safety. Additionally, it is anticipated that the RCMP will take part in Mental Health First Aid for Northern Peoples training sessions. This course is facilitated by the Mental Health Commission of Canada."

Can the minister provide an update today on how many officers have taken part in the Mental Health First Aid for Northern Peoples training sessions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really appreciate the member's line of questioning along this. I think it's very important to recognize that policing in Nunavut is different than other parts of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken, actually, directly to the chief superintendent here in Iqaluit and also members of her staff. I know my department currently has ongoing communications with. I think one of the biggest steps that the chief superintendent has provided me is in expanding the orientation program for members that come to the north. They're looking at drawing it out over a week instead of just a few days and including the family members, not just the members that are coming themselves, but including family members. I know that there was an event in Rankin Inlet earlier this summer. I believe it was in July they had an open house and it was very well attended and a very good public event.

Unfortunately I don't have the level of detail of how many members have gone through the mental health training. I would have to get back to the member on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I strongly support efforts to ensure that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are accountable. There were two incidents in Chesterfield Inlet, one regarding young girls panicking, the community became panicky and contacted me, and the other one regarding an individual who did get very frightened of the RCMP, but it was looked into.

However, as the minister will recall, Bill 53, *An Act to Amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Agreement Act*, was passed by the Legislative Assembly earlier this year. This bill provided for the Government of Nunavut to enter into agreements with civilian-led independent investigative bodies to review serious incidents involving police in the territory.

One of the good news stories is one RCMP member that arrived to Cambridge Bay put out on Facebook media, introducing himself, wanting to work with the community, and I thought that was a very good news story.

Can the minister confirm when the provisions of this legislation will be brought into force? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. While I can't provide an exact date, I can assure all members and the public listening that the regulations are currently being worked on and hopefully, as soon as they're complete in the near future, it will be enacted immediately. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Oral Questions. The Hon. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerck.

Question 1439 – 5(2): Airport Upgrade Update for Sanirajak

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will proceed with my question to the Minister of Transportation.

As I mentioned earlier in my member's statement, approximately \$10 million was provided by the federal government for the airport upgrade in Sanirajak. As I understand it, elections are looming. However, the government staff will continue on with their work.

Can the minister clarify what plans the Department of Transportation has for the airport in Sanirajak after the upgrades have been made? I would like to know if any plans have been made for the airport in Sanirajak. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. The Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal funds that we requested are often approved. The upgrade in Sanirajak will be completed this year. Upon completion, the airports in Nunavut...we asked for a request. With respect to the upgrade in Sanirajak, it's for practical purposes that it remains a good airport. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is not a response to my question. Yes, we all saw this. You came to me, I believe, it has been two years now. You said that you have \$10 million now for upgrades to Sanikiluaq's airport. My question is with respect to your Department of Transportation. What more are you going to do for the community of Sanirajak for the benefit of transportation in Nunavut as a whole? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought I answered the question. My answer was in relation to the funds received that we expended.

With regard to the comment that the airport be a central location or a site for airplanes being tested, that we utilize the airlines more, and jets are able to use the airport in Sanirajak and they can be the central airport, we cannot decide for the airlines and we all know the airlines are pretty segregated in Nunavut, but we would have to work with the airlines. Any encouragement or promotion is something we try to pursue.

With regard to Sanirajak, the airport has been heavily utilized and what improvements can be made is something that we can continue working on. However, the airlines are the ones that would have to work towards this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister seems to indicate that the Department of Transportation can't really do much about the airlines, but perhaps the minister can tell the airlines, "Here's Sanirajak as well." That is one thing. Sanirajak and Igloolik are both in Amittuq, and perhaps upgrades will be needed too for Igloolik.

My question now to the minister is, as he mentioned earlier, there were funds for an upgrade. Thank you, federal government. If I may add, we have an airport that can be upgraded and used. Perhaps when they want to do a study on airlines, we have that airport terminal as well and perhaps Grise Fiord too. I don't know. However, by using places like these, it can really help communities to advance and can create jobs. The community that I represent is not one of the decentralized communities, but I don't want it to be forgotten.

At the last sitting before we end our term, I encourage you to bring attention to which airports have been upgraded and which ones need upgrades. Do this so that they receive the attention that they need and are not forgotten. Will the minister commit to relaying this information to their staff and deputy minister so that what improvements can be made, as well as for the benefit of getting jobs and so forth? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our staff is fully aware of these problems and we are continuously working to develop solutions and solve them. Airlines in the arctic and airplanes that fly in the arctic often undergo testing at different airports, and although we can inform organizations which airports are available for testing, we are not the ones that ultimately make the decisions of where it occurs. However, we can and do try to encourage and entice airlines to use certain airports. Many communities can also be used towards that and we provide information and work in this area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Oral Questions. The Hon. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Question 1440 – 5(2): Clare’s Law for Nunavut

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the minister of Justice.

I have asked our government to create Claire’s Law on a number of occasions. The previous Minister of Justice stated that given the size of our communities, it is not the lack of information that is the principal risk to individuals. I disagree given the transient nature of Iqaluit and the number of people moving here from across the territory and across Canada every year. I still believe if proactive measures such as the disclosing of information can save one life, creating this legislation is more than worth it.

Mr. Speaker, earlier this summer Nunavut’s Information and Privacy Commissioner publicly announced that his office had provided a formal written submission to the Department of Justice concerning this initiative. I subsequently exchanged correspondence with the Information and Privacy Commissioner, a copy of which I will be tabling at the appropriate time.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, I requested that he provide copies of his department’s consultation materials on this important issue in the Legislative Assembly. I would like to ask: can the minister confirm if he will do so? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. The Hon. Minister of Justice, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It wouldn’t be appropriate for me to share those submissions at this time as that consultation is still ongoing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Moving on to my next question, I’m hopeful that one of the first bills that will be introduced by the next government will be introducing a new Claire’s Law, the Claire’s Law for Nunavut. I am very hopeful that it will include provisions to also address the issue of violence against children. I would like

to ask the minister to confirm how much progress the Department of Justice has made in developing this new legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure the member is aware that in August we started our consultation for the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* and related family laws. We've had consultations here in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, Nauyasat, and Pond Inlet. They're currently in Sanirajak right now and Igloolik later this week. Unfortunately Gjoa Haven and Cambridge Bay were delayed due to the COVID outbreak in Yellowknife, but as long as the Sixth Assembly maintains this as a priority, which I sincerely hope they do, those consultations and appropriate legislation will be forthcoming. Thank you.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister had indicated, the Department of Justice is currently conducting community consultations on the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* and other family laws. I would like to ask: can the minister describe what specific changes to these laws are being considered by the government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, those consultations are still ongoing. That's what helps us shape what direction and the types of legislative changes or new legislation that comes in, but I can assure the member that we did make Clare's Law as one of the agenda items on these consultations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Oral Questions. The Hon. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Question 1441 – 5(2): Update on Collective Bargaining with Unions

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have questions for the Minister of Human Resources and they concern collective bargaining.

(interpretation ends) First of all, I would like to quickly send a shout-out to the hard-working Government of Nunavut, Qulliq Energy Corporation and our school employees in Arviat and Whale Cove. Please know that your service is greatly appreciated.

As the minister is well aware, the GN's collective agreement with the Nunavut Employees Union expired in September 2018, almost three years ago, the Qulliq Energy Corporation's collective agreement with the Nunavut Employees Union expired in December 2020, and the GN's collective agreement with the Nunavut Teachers Association expired in June of this year.

Mr. Speaker, this means that all of our government's unionized employees are working under expired collective agreements. My first question for the minister: what message does the minister have for the GN's unionized employees regarding this unacceptable situation? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. The Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the Nunavut Teachers Association and the Qulliq Energy Corporation, the formalization of the bargaining teams has started and will start discussions. I encourage those tables to sit with our government and come up with an agreement.

As for the Nunavut Employees Union, I encourage to get back to the table. They're waiting on a court case. They don't want to sit with us until that court case is done. That has dragged on far too long and I encourage them to come back. We're prepared. We're ready to have an agreement with our collective agreements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) When my colleague raised this issue in the spring sitting, the minister did not provide a clear explanation as to why he did not support going to binding arbitration to resolve the impasse with the Nunavut Employees Union. For the record, can the minister confirm under what circumstances he would be prepared to accept binding arbitration to resolve this dispute or situation? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Having reached a negotiated agreement is an outcome that we want to see. There are different methods of ways that it can be done and this is one that they are waiting on a particular section that they're looking to see with the courts whether we have been negotiating in bad faith or not. We need to get that out of the way.

There is mediation. There is arbitration. There are different methods. Right now our team would like to have this through a negotiated collective agreement and that's our preference. Having been told to go through the arbitration, which basically you're being told what to do, is not the right way. It does not work for both parties, but from my perspective, both parties can and should negotiate a collective agreement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I understand that binding arbitration is not necessarily the first or most desirable option to parties when they are negotiating, but when disputes arise and when disputes

are dragged out and negotiations are stalled, I believe that's why binding arbitration exists, in order to reach a solution, in order to see a new agreement put in place.

I would like to reiterate that it has been close to three years, Mr. Speaker. I know that our hard-working Nunavut Employees Union members are eagerly awaiting resolution to this. I'll ask my question again. Under what circumstances would the minister be prepared to accept binding arbitration to resolve this situation? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do applaud our hard-working public service and I hope that we do come up with a collective agreement that both parties can agree to. I would like to stress that they go through that process. It's the process that they should be going through. The court case is not necessarily at the union or the government's preferred schedule; it has gone through the courts. As you now, through COVID, court cases have been delayed and delayed and delayed. The last schedule is that it's supposed to be this month and we're hopeful that this month that that court case will be heard and a ruling will be given, therefore it can be moved forward. I hope that, through that, we can get it through. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Oral Questions. The Hon. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Netser.

Question 1442 – 5(2): Upgrading at Nunavut Arctic College

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday I was picking on the Minister responsible for Arctic College. I have more questions for the Minister responsible for Arctic College today.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, yesterday I picked on the college a bit, but today I would like to recognize the important role that they play in preparing and developing Nunavummiut for jobs and employment across our territory.

Mr. Speaker, it is often the case that when our high school graduates attend Nunavut Arctic College, they do not have the level of academic knowledge that they should have in order to begin a post-secondary program. (interpretation) We have found that when our high school graduates attend college, they require upgrading and that's what we are told by our constituents.

(interpretation ends) Can the minister provide a brief overview of the kinds of upgrading or foundation level programs that the college offers and indicate what percentage Nunavut Arctic College students need these programs before beginning an academic program? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. The Hon. Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his questions. Mr. Speaker, Arctic College delivers community level programming through its community learning centres, which includes different certifications, whether it is certificates, diplomas, or degrees.

Some of the programs, such as adult educators, offer adult basic education essential skills. Some of the program course content includes literacy, pre-employment and academic readiness programs. There are select programs that may be offered at local learning centres if third party funding is secured and such programs can include office administration, college foundations, or environmental technology programs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In June 2019 a report by the Auditor General of Canada was tabled in this House titled “Support for High School Students and Adult Learners.” That audit report opened our eyes to a number of ways in which the Department of Education is failing to prepare students for options after high school.

Mr. Speaker, one of the report’s recommendations stated that “Nunavut Arctic College should inform high school students about the various academic programs it offers, and ensure that it keeps information on its programs and admission requirements clear and up to date.”

Can the minister provide an update on what steps have been taken by Nunavut Arctic College to address the Auditor General’s recommendation? I note the minister is carrying both hats as the college minister and the Department of Education. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nunavut Arctic College, in partnership with the Department of Education, we have reviewed and agree with the recommendations coming through from the Auditor General. We are trying to make headway on different fronts in this area and we are tracking on how we can achieve some objectives coming from the recommendations of that report. I hope to see some progress in this area as the college and Education move forward together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My next question may have already been partially answered. When our high school students graduate and then attend Nunavut Arctic College, they are under the impression that they have an adequate academic level to attend the college, but then discover that their high school education is not adequate and that they will have to undergo some kind of upgrading or take foundation level programs in order to meet the basic requirements of a program.

Can the minister describe how Nunavut Arctic College works with Department of Education to address upgrading needs for Nunavut students? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is concerned about our graduating students and their levels of academic knowledge and so am I. If a graduate is entering a higher level of education, they should have the proper academic level. If we look at our education system, we use a bilingual system and that should be recognized right up to grade 12. We provide different programs at the Nunavut Arctic College level and the Inuktitut language should be utilized more, both at the college and in the high schools. We have to keep in mind that we use a bilingual system right up to the high school level. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Oral Questions. The Hon. Member for Tununig, Mr. Qamaniq.

Question 1443 – 5(2): Nunavut Housing Corporation’s Structure and Operations

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will now speak in English. (interpretation ends) My questions are for the minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

As the minister will recall, one of the NHC’s recent business plan priorities was to “Implement an improved organizational structure in the Qikiqtaaluk District.” As the minister is well aware, there are over a dozen communities in the Qikiqtaaluk.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the idea of dividing the Nunavut Housing Corporation’s Qikiqtaaluk district office into two entities, one serving South Baffin and one serving North Baffin. What is the minister’s position on establishing a new North Baffin district office located in Pond Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister of the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you, Mr. Qamaniq for your question. The Nunavut Housing Corporation has had discussions regarding the division into the two entities, but we have encountered repeated delays due to the pandemic, and other priorities taking over. If we did decide to build another district office, we would have to decide in the future where it is going to be located. That decision has not been made yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to the government’s most recent employment figures, one-third of the positions in the Nunavut Housing Corporation’s current Qikiqtaaluk district office are vacant. What specific actions is the minister taking

to increase its capacity to serve residents of North Baffin communities, including Pond Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank you for asking that question. As I mentioned earlier, we had to deal with other urgent matters that arose, as well as the pandemic. With all the planning required and the large workload of our staff, we have not yet made any decisions regarding that issue. The plan that was going to be put in place is not in place yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for her response. During yesterday's sitting of the Legislative Assembly, the minister announced that the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has "introduced the Canada Nunavut Housing Benefit, a National Housing Strategy initiative intended to provide a rent subsidy to ease hardship by facilitating access to housing on the private market for individuals, youth, or families who are experiencing vulnerability or crisis. This is a joint investment of \$18.0 million to support over 670 low-income households. The Nunavut Housing Corporation will administer these funds with the Department of Family Services."

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that some of these funds will benefit residents of Pond Inlet. Can the minister clarify if these funds will be administered from the Nunavut Housing Corporation's three district offices or from its headquarters in Iqaluit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking about that matter. As I mentioned earlier, the funds from the federal government of \$9 million and \$9 million from the Nunavut government, for a total of \$18 million, the planning has been a joint effort, and we were planning to work with the Department of Family Services. It will be slated more towards low-income households in Nunavut and once they start looking into it, things will fall in place on where the funds will be utilized. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Oral Questions. The Hon. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Question 1444 – 5(2): Concerns at Tammaativvik Boarding Home

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What a pleasant surprise. Thank you.

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

Mr. Speaker, in my member's statement yesterday, I described some concerns that have been raised by my constituents regarding the Tammaativvik Boarding Home in Iqaluit.

Can the minister clearly explain how his department addresses concerns about the boarding homes? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. The Hon. Minister of Health, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the comments my colleague made yesterday regarding the Tammaativvik in Iqaluit. Mr. Speaker, being a member for Rankin Inlet also and knowing many people from the Kivalliq that come through Iqaluit, I've had an opportunity to meet them, talk to them at the store, on the street, at Tammaativvik, at health centres.

As my colleague knows, I have been spending a major part of the year here in Iqaluit, so I get to communicate with many people who come there. My experience has been that a vast majority of them enjoy their stay there. I personally have gone there on many occasions unannounced and a majority of the people who stay there have had very pleasant experiences and some of them do not and just as much as those that do not come from the Kivalliq also have some experiences that are not too pleasant when they are there.

In both instances, when I am notified of an unpleasant visit and a pleasant visit, I share them with our patient relations department. Our patient relations department has a number that patients can call. Those numbers and contact information are at the Tammaativvik centre itself. Upon hearing about concerns of the facility in this instance, I would contact the patient relations office and notify them of the situation and also, I will contact my senior staff if I have an interaction with a patient who stayed at the facility and had an unpleasant visit and I would also share the pleasant one. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm talking about a system, not personal interactions; a professional contractor system.

Recently there have been complaints about Tammaativvik staff. As I noted earlier, the staff at the front desk boarding home are not from the north and do not speak Inuktitut. A number of my constituents who have to travel to Iqaluit for medical care have told me personally that they are afraid of approaching the staff. I'm talking about the contractor's term that they have agreed to, not the Inuit patient relations, even though that's a vehicle that the government has made the contractor.

Can the minister clarify what steps are taken to ensure that services at the Tammaativvik Boarding Home are available in Inuktitut, knowing that Inuktitut is one of the official languages in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Speaker, we're talking about the same thing. Mr. Speaker, we have a professional set-up with the patients. It's called patient relations. It works out of the Department of Health and anybody who has a problem or issue with the health department can contact that number and/or the persons working there. Those persons will talk with the contractors, and I'm talking about the contractors that work on the Tammaativvik centre, and let them know about the issues that are there. Sometimes it is staff related, sometimes it is not staff related, but they are contacted, as per the agreement that the Government of Nunavut has with Tammaativvik.

Tammaativvik does have Inuit staff, Mr. Speaker. I'm not here to defend them; I'm here to state facts. The fact is they have staff at the front desk that are totally bilingual that are Inuit, they have cleaning staff that are bilingual, they have people in the kitchen that are bilingual, and they have drivers that are bilingual, Mr. Speaker. We are constantly in communication with the Tammaativvik contractors to ensure that best care is given to people who are staying there and that they are provided communication in the language of their choice, Inuktitut being the priority, Mr. Speaker.

I assure my colleague that her question is taken very seriously and every concern brought forward by any person in Nunavut who is staying at the Tammaativvik, whether they are from Rankin Inlet, Repulse Bay, or Pond Inlet or any other place in Nunavut, are given the best care possible and, if they have any issue with that, please contact the patient relations office and/or me or the MLAs and if the MLAs would communicate their concerns with me, I will assure you, as I have with all the other MLAs, I will bring up the concerns and make sure that they're dealt with professionally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister, for your response. I do not get into personality politics, saying I met with these constituents and I met with that constituent; I get into the contracting structures when there is an issue with my constituents.

I believe that the boarding home services that are provided to Inuit in Nunavut should always be available in the Inuit language, as the minister himself believes in that, and respecting the Inuit culture. My concern becomes when the Inuit patient becomes afraid of the front desk personnel that they first meet when they go into the Tammaativvik and do not feel welcome and not only that, no longer want to stay at the Tammaativvik Boarding Home when it's publicly funded by the Government of Nunavut for Inuit patients and others.

Will the minister commit to instructing his officials to reviewing the situation at the Tammaativvik Boarding Home at the earliest possible opportunity? Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Inuit patient relations is no longer enough when there is a contract involved. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Speaker, as I said earlier, I appreciate the question. The patient relations office is a tool in our tool bag that we use in order to work on issues such as the issue that my colleague is bringing up, Mr. Speaker. There is nobody here talking about personal relations and stuff like that.

Mr. Speaker, our department is in constant communication with Tammaativvik and other boarding homes across Canada that we use. We have boarding homes in Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and the NWT and our department is in constant communication with them. Our communications are fluid and always at the utmost is the best care for beneficiaries that are staying at the boarding homes because that's the purpose of them. It's so that our beneficiaries have the best care possible when they are in transit and getting medical attention wherever they may be. If they are under the care of the Government of Nunavut, we want nothing but the best care for them and that work continues.

I assure my colleague and my colleagues that we are in constant communication, trying to make things better for beneficiaries that are staying at these boarding homes, Mr. Speaker. I assure my colleague that that will continue and we will look into the matter further as to my colleague's concerns and members' concerns about the boarding home here and the front desk reception. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. I would like to remind members that the time allotted for question period has now expired. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Pursuant to Rule 39(7), I seek unanimous consent as representatives of Nunavummiut to extend question period by an additional 30 minutes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Are there any nays?

An Hon. Member: Nay.

Speaker: Hearing a nay, we will move on in the orders of the day. Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Petitions. Item 11. Responses to Petitions. Item 12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Mr. Main.

Item 12: Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters

Committee Report 045 – 5(2): Bill 55, An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I wish to report that Bill 55, *An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act*, has been reviewed by the Standing Committee on Legislation and that the bill is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to waive Rule 68(6) and have Bill 55, as amended and reprinted, immediately moved into Committee of the Whole. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. The chair of the standing committee is seeking unanimous consent to have Bill 55 immediately referred to Committee of the Whole. Are there any nays? There are none and Bill 55 is referred to Committee of the Whole.

Item 13. Tabling of Documents. The Hon. Member for the Department of Education, Minister Akeegok. Sorry. Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Akeegok.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents**Tabled Document 415 – 5(2): COVID-19 Business Recovery Plan**

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to table the Government of Nunavut Department of Economic Development and Transportation's COVID-19 Business Recovery Plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Tabling of Documents. The Hon. Member of Education, Minister Joanasie.

Tabled Document 416 – 5(2): 2017-18 Department of Education Annual Report**Tabled Document 417 – 5(2): 2018-19 Department of Education Annual Report****Tabled Document 418 – 5(2): 2019-2020 Department of Education Annual Report**

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give you a smile. Mr. Speaker, I wish to table these three annual reports from the Department of Education for 2017-18, 2018-19, and the last one is for 2019-2020. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Tabling of Documents. The Hon. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Tabled Document 419 – 5(2): Correspondence with the Information and Privacy Commissioner Concerning Clare’s Law for Nunavut

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am tabling today a copy of my recent exchange of correspondence with the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Nunavut concerning the important issue of introducing a Clare’s Law in Nunavut. Mr. Speaker, these are important matters and I urge all members as well as the public to review these documents with care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Tabling of Documents. Moving on. Item 14. Notices of Motions. Item 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 16. Motions. Item 17. First Reading of Bills. Item 18. Second Reading of Bills. Item 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bill 55 with Mr. Akoak in the Chair.

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

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>House recessed at 15:46 and Committee resumed at 16:12

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

Chairman (Mr. Akoak): Thank you. Welcome back, committee 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 55. What is the wish of the committee? Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to commence the clause-by-clause review of Bill 55. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Bill 55 – An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act –
Consideration in Committee**

Chairman: Thank you. We will now proceed to the review of Bill 55. I would now like to ask Minister Ehaloak: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Ehaloak.

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. For the record, Minister Ehaloak, please introduce your officials and proceed with your opening comments. Minister Ehaloak.

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to introduce to my right is Deputy Minister Kyle Seeley, and to my left is Legal Counsel Mr. Thomas Ahlfors.

Good afternoon, colleagues. It is my pleasure to appear before Members of this House for a clause-by-clause consideration of Bill 55, *An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act*.

These amendments we are proposing to the *Property Assessment and Taxation Act* are designed to improve our administrative processes and importantly, will provide clear direction about aspects of property assessments to align with the *Nunavut Agreement*. Taken together, our goal is to improve the effectiveness and clarity of existing property assessment processes to benefit both property owners and the Government of Nunavut.

Specifically Bill 55 amends to clarify how Inuit-owned lands are treated in terms of property assessment. While the *Nunavut Agreement* is clear when Inuit-owned lands are taxable, it is not clear on who should be assessed those taxes. This is one of the issues we intend to clarify through Bill 55.

Being an “assessed owner” for tax purposes does not change actual ownership or other rights. It just means we know who to assess the taxes to first and who to collect from in the end.

As proposed, Bill 55 seeks to create the following situations:

- In cases where the landowner has only surface rights and where subsurface resources, like minerals, are being extracted through a mining operation, Bill 55 proposes the government would assess the landowner only for the value of the land.
- Separately the government would assess the lessee, the firm leasing the land, for the value of any improvements associated with their operations on the land (for example, mining).
- In cases where the landowner owns both surface and subsurface rights, Bill 55 proposes to assess the landowner for both the value of the land and of all improvements made to it.
- Importantly we are not suggesting that landowners must be the ones to bear the cost of the tax. Inuit organizations already require land leases and other agreements with their tenants. These agreements are robust, legally binding, and set out a range of requirements and expectations of the tenant. Such agreements allow landowners to pass along the costs of property taxes to the tenants.

Mr. Chairman, in addition to proposed amendments to clarify the treatment of Inuit-owned lands, we are furthering proposing amendments to improve the overall management of property assessment and taxation processes in Nunavut.

Specifically we are proposing to streamline the initial complaints process. Currently the existing legislation provides mechanisms for individuals to address disagreements with assessments or to appeal factors impacting their assessment by submitting a complaint to a territorial board of revision. Issues that escalate beyond the board of revision go on to a separate assessment appeal tribunal, another level of process. Issues that escalate beyond the tribunal go to the courts.

We initially proposed to abolish the Territorial Board of Revision and transfer responsibilities to the director of assessment, an employee of the Department of Community and Government Services. By proposing to eliminate the Territorial Board of Revision and transfer the first level of review to the director, we anticipated that complaints could be resolved quicker and at a reduced cost.

However, feedback we received from the standing committee related to transferring such responsibilities to an impartial party has caused us to reconsider this initial proposal. We heard your concerns and we are now proposing to maintain the Territorial Board of Revision and introduce alternative motions to address these administrative challenges.

We are also proposing an amendment that seeks to improve the handling of complaints by clarifying the process and timelines of submitting complaints as well as detailed information on the content required within a complaint.

The complexity of matters being dealt with by the Assessment Appeal Tribunal has increased in recent years. The bill provides additional measures to reduce disruptions in matters before the tribunal by allowing tribunal members to continue participating in appeals that extend beyond their appointed term. This issue has posed a challenge in previously scheduled hearings. Bill 55 proposes amendments to address this issue in the future by ensuring continuity within the tribunal until conclusion of specific appeals.

Bill 55 also includes amendments intended to improve assessment practices and reduce the number of complaints associated with different interpretations of common assessment elements. For example, disagreement regarding the classification of types of machinery and equipment that may be assessed as improvements is a common element of complaints submitted to the Territorial Board of Revision and subsequent appeals submitted to the Assessment Appeal Tribunal.

Mr. Chairman, Bill 55 was drafted in consultation with Inuit organizations. My colleagues and I considered the feedback provided and incorporated it into this bill before this committee.

As we heard throughout the televised hearing, our proposed approach does not fully satisfy the preferred approach of the Inuit organizations. However, we believe Bill 55 represents a fair and reasonable approach to property assessment and taxation.

I welcome questions and comments from members on this bill before you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the chair of the standing committee have comments? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I am pleased to make some brief comments as we begin consideration of Bill 55, (interpretation ends) *An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act*.

As members will recall, the standing committee held a televised hearing earlier this year on the bill. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all parties that appeared before the standing committee and to acknowledge the efforts that were made to prepare submissions for the standing committee's consideration.

The standing committee appreciates the minister having acted on the concerns raised in respect to the proposed abolition of the Territorial Board of Revision. Motions to amend the bill were adopted at the standing committee's clause-by-clause stage of consideration that are intended to retain the board while addressing the operational issues facing it.

The standing committee also appreciates the minister having committed to reviewing the development of new regulations to address the treatment of private roads open for public use. The standing committee recognizes that property taxes are an important source of revenue for the territorial government. The most recent public accounts indicate that \$8,384,000 was raised during the 2019-2020 fiscal year through the levying of property taxes. The 2021-22 main estimates project that \$11.6 million will be raised from property taxes during the current fiscal year. These revenues flow to the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Through the annual budget process, the elected Members of the Legislative Assembly approve the government's proposed operations and maintenance and capital expenditures, which encompass everything, from the construction of new schools and other community infrastructure to the provision of health care and other public services to Nunavummiut.

The standing committee recognizes the importance of having a clear legal framework in place that provides certainty in respect to the assessment and collection of property taxes. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Are there any general comments? Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will be supporting Bill 55. My reasoning is that within the agreement, NTI and Inuit organizations, the (interpretation ends) NLCA, (interpretation) the *Nunavut Agreement*, Article 22, they have agreed that taxes would be made then and you can look that up in the agreement, as they agreed to it. Now mining companies have more clarity to explore and the government also has to have clarity on what process will be made towards taxation, as it should be. As is, Bill 55, *An Act to Amend the Property Assessment and Taxation Act*, I will support it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: General comments? Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I would like to take this opportunity to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We have a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion. All those opposed. The motion is carried. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out. I will now rise to report progress.

Speaker: Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Akoak.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 55 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: There's a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Keyotak. All those in favour. Opposed. Motion carried.

Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. Item 22. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a reminder that tomorrow morning, the Standing Committee on Legislation meets in the Nanuq Boardroom at nine o'clock.

Orders of the Day for September 15:

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 55
20. Report of the Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, September 15, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 16:30*

