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

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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(Akulliq)

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(Iqaluit Centre)

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Wednesday March 5, 2003

Members Present:

Mr. James Arvaluk, Mr. Donald Havioyak, Mr. David Iqaqrialu, Mr. Enoki Irqittuq, Honourable Peter Kattuk, Mr. Jobie Nutarak, Honourable Kelvin Ng, Honourable Paul Okalik, Honourable Ed Picco, Hon. Manitok Thompson, Mr. Hunter Tootoo, Ms. Rebekah Williams.

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Deputy Speaker (Mr. Puqiqnak): I would like to call on Ms. Williams to say the opening prayer.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good afternoon Members, Mr. Premier, the people in the gallery. I would like to welcome you all. Orders of the Day. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Minister responsible for Community Government and Transportation. Minister Thompson.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 114 - 1(6): 2003 Canada Winter Games

Hon. Manitok Thompson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Please give me a round of applause at the appropriate time. When I mention something please applaud.

(interpretation ends) I rise today to speak to the Members about the 2003 Canada Winter Games in Campbellton-Bathurst, New Brunswick.

>>*Applause*

(interpretation) Nunavut sent its first ever team to these games. I was in New Brunswick for the opening ceremonies and would like to report that team Nunavut represented our territory with great respect and dignity. These young men and women are examples of our youth who show that with hard work and dedication, anything is possible.

Mr. Speaker, Team Nunavut was comprised of two athletic teams. There was a participant in the National Artistic Program, which was in drum dancing. We competed in the sports of short track speed skating and badminton.

Although this was our first Canada Winter Games and our expectations were modest and realistic, our athletes accomplished a great deal at these games. So give me a round of applause.

>> *Applause*

(interpretation ends) Our short track speed skating team was in tough competition against the other provinces and territories but gave their best effort to qualify for further competition.

In fact five of our members were able to set personal best times at these games, which is quite an accomplishment. Our badminton team also did very well and on our final day of competition we were able to win 5 out of 10 matches.

>> *Applause*

Our representative in the National Artistic Program is currently participating in activities associated with the games and will be taking part in the gala performance later this week, on March 6 and 7.

I am certain that all Members join me in congratulating our team, their coaches, and Chefs de Missions for a job well done at these games. Thank you very much.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We are very proud of our athletes. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Uquqmmiut. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 354 – 1(6): Education Curriculum in Nunavut

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have my clock running here and I am pleased with that. I am sure I'll be informed if I go over my limit.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to make a Member's Statement in regards to Education. Mr. Speaker, the curriculum does not reflect the needs of the schools of the smaller communities of Nunavut and that is not fair to them.

The curriculum that is taught when they enter the school system teaches our children on how they think and this conditions them to their new way of life. Mr. Speaker, at present, the curriculum used in instruction is based on the English academic system. The Inuktitut instructors' curriculum is not treated as a priority by the Minister of Education and sometimes outright neglected. Looking at the situation it endangers our traditional values and principals.

Mr. Speaker, the Inuktitut curriculum development centres and the individuals who have to make their own instructional materials are not supported. We have to do more to

support the staff who develop Inuktitut teaching material and provide them with adequate funding.

It has become obvious that when the District Education Authorities request support to develop Inuktitut curriculum the Departmental bureaucracy seems to look for reasons not to provide support and this is not acceptable.

Mr. Speaker, there are not enough apprenticeship programs available in Nunavut, even though it is a very important part of the learning process. The department only considers programs that are available down south. When the community Inuit representatives request additional funding for administration costs, they keep getting a small portion of what they had requested.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, it has become obvious that what we want in our communities have been denied and everything is imposed upon us. The education system has had a detrimental effect on our traditions to a point where we have lost our identities as representatives of Nunavut because it does not reflect our traditional needs.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Iqaqrialu.

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

Speaker (interpretation): The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can further say that we have seen a lot of drop outs and Mr. Speaker, they don't have a traditional Inuit identity and they don't have an English identity either.

It is unfortunate because we don't want to lose our identity when you consider the number of suicides of Inuit, there has never been a study done on whether the education system has had any effect on them.

Mr. Speaker, I really have empathy in my heart on this issue. Mr. Speaker, There needs to be a better direction for Nunavummiut in the education system that will have some form of consistency for students.

We also need more creative ways to keep our students from dropping out of school. We also need to listen to the community needs because they want to start evolving on their own.

Mr. Speaker, anywhere in the world, the education institutions condition students in ways the will influence their lives. It has also become very clear that it takes away from their parents traditional identity.

Mr. Speaker, we urgently need to start supporting our Inuit instructors who have to make their own material for teaching. We need to start providing adequate funding Inuktitut curriculum. We need to provide for Elders' and Youth Programs so that they can start to work together.

Mr. Speaker, we will have to come up with objectives that will be straight on and make no room for errors in this matter. We need to start developing our own curriculum that reflects the needs of the people of Nunavut. It is vital and we do not want to have the Departmental bureaucrats tell us what to do anymore.

Mr. Speaker, as the people of Nunavut we have to look at solutions through the Education System and because it has influence on our children. We have to look at the Inuit culture and traditions and funding that will meet the needs of the people, that we meet the needs that are required to teach education and also our language and our culture.

As the people of Nunavut and as everyone is aware, there are just too many suicides committed in our Territory. There is an urgent need for the Government, and for the people, to find those solutions. Our culture and our language have to be adequately funded in order to make improvements in the lifestyle of the people of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Orders of the Day. Members' Statements. The Member for Amittuq. Mr. Iqittuq.

Member's Statement 355 – 1(6): Question on the Services of the Government of Nunavut

Mr. Iqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, Members of the Legislative Assembly. I do not want to put down the Government of Nunavut, but yesterday when I was posing questions to the Department of Justice, the feeling that I got was that this was the first time that the department heard about what I was talking about. That was the feeling that I had yesterday.

It is very possible that the previous Government, in their usual practice, was to keep the inmates from seeing their immediate family members, their loved ones, and their relatives. Usually what happened was that the remanded people were sent to another community, or kept in custody until their trial date, following of course, the Legislation of the previous Government, which has been brought to the Government of Nunavut.

So yesterday I found that they are just sent out to the communities. The inmates are sent to the communities and they are not given any kind financial support for them to be self sufficient. They are very likely going through the welfare system in order to survive in a community that is alien to them. They are probably not counselled nor given any other type of service that they require.

They are not properly supported, but they do require help. And the reason why I am making a statement on this issue is I noticed that this was a problem with the previous Government.

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

Speaker (interpretation): The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statements. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed. Mr. Irqittuq.

Mr. Irqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am glad that the Members did not say nay. Looking at the present system that we are using today, we are in a very serious situation.

In regards to the questions that I posed to the Department and I am sure that there are other cases as such individuals who are out there in the communities with no support system available.

What I heard was that there was a court order saying that this individual should not be near underage children, but because the community of Hall Beach was not informed, this individual was a babysitter, for I don't know how many months, maybe six months, before we finally heard that he was not supposed to be around minor children.

Mr. Speaker, as an Inuit we have legislation and the court orders and other procedures that we have to follow. This is very scary and this has to be remedied by the Department of Justice as they said that this was the first time that they had heard this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Rankin North. Mr. Anawak.

Member's Statement 356 – 1(6): History of Inuit Travelling Down South

Hon. Jack Anawak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes it is North sometimes it is South; it works both ways when you are representing a community. I would like to first of all congratulate the residents of Rankin Inlet, where they had the Keewatin Youth Hockey Challenge in the Avataq Cup; Rankin came in first and Naujaat came in second. I would also like to congratulate them.

I think that it would have been a very significant time around 1923 when the ships were coming in. There were four young Inuit who were sent down South.

These four individuals Savikataaq from Arviat, Taapatai from Baker Lake, Angutitauq from Repulse Bay, who is the father of Peter Irniq, our commissioner and Angutinnguaq, who is my adopted father, were sent down south for a year where they learned how to speak English and that was way back in 1923. They were very young and it was a

significant time in their life and they were tested to see if the Inuit the nomadic people could survive down there in the south.

I think my adopted father was the last one to pass away in 1988, when I was just elected to Parliament. I am very proud of my adopted father, and I just wanted to make a Member's Statement to show the significance of the hardships that our forefathers went through and being able to survive in an alien environment.

They were in Halifax for one year. That was way back in 1923, many, many years ago. I wanted to rise in the House to congratulate and to signify this incident. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Anawak. Members' Statements. The Member for Tasiujaq, Minister Kattuk.

Members' Statement 357 - 1(6): Kujuaraapik Hockey Game/Sanikiluaq Arena

Hon. Peter Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am speaking on behalf of my constituency in Sanikiluaq. I would like to say greetings to my family in Sanikiluaq, my father and my siblings and all of the residents.

What I am going to be mentioning happened last year in the fall. It is not pleasing to hear, especially since we are so far from Baffin Island, but we were invited to send a hockey team from Sanikiluaq to a tournament in Nunavik. This was in October when a game was played in Kuujuarapik, and Sanikiluaq gets an invitation to play hockey with the Kuujuarapik residents.

I am grateful that they invited us to play in these athletic games, although Sanikiluaq did not win. Our hockey arena is not utilized during that month because we have to wait for freeze up to get the ice thick enough for skating.

In March 2002 there was a hockey tournament going on between our communities. They invited us to play hockey again in October. But, due to the different weather that we have in our community, the climate has changed drastically, and the freeze up only happens in December. Although it was frozen over in October, the climate warmed so much that the ice then started to break up in December.

Although we do not play much hockey, I appreciate that Sanikiluaq residents were invited to play hockey in Nunavik. We have been invited again just recently to play more hockey. At the last game, the Sanikiluaq people won the competition. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Keep in mind that we have two and a half minutes to make our Members' Statements. The Member for Iqaluit East, Mr. Picco.

Members' Statement 358 - 1(6): Congratulations to Josephee Baines and Susie Shaimaiyuk

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Members' Statements give all Members a chance to reflect on issues of the day, on concerns, to provide thanks to the Members, and to the House, give congratulations to constituents who have done well, and to talk about issues that affect the Members.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the opportunity of Members' Statements is to give some congratulations. In this thing, today, Mr. Speaker, I would like to give a short Members' Statement on congratulations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely congratulate two young people. Two young people, Mr. Speaker, who were married this past weekend. Josephee Baines is an excellent role model for young Nunavummiut.

Joe is from Apex, and is a graduate of the RCMP Program, and is currently working here in the community as a RCMP Constable. Joe's new wife, Mr. Speaker, is Susie Shaimaiyuk, who is originally from Pangnirtung, but has lived here in Iqaluit for the last several years, and currently works for the Minister of Health here at the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, the wedding on this past weekend was very emotional and Mr. Speaker, on behalf of their many friends, families, and their parents, we would like to wish the very best to Joe and Suzie Banes as they move forward in their life together in holy matrimony.

And I want to just add a little special note, Mr. Speaker, Susie has not been able to come to work since her honey moon; she has actually been sick, she was sick before her wedding, she had a bad cold, nuvattuq, she was very nuvak and we expect to see her back in the office in the next few days and we would like to wish her and Joe the very best and pursue immediate recovery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Picco. Members' Statements. Member for Quttiktuq. Ms. Williams.

Member's Statement 359 – 1(6): Small Communities in Need of Larger Facilities

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a cold myself. I rise today, Mr. Speaker, to make a Member's Statement on an issue that was brought to the Premier about the smaller communities that they will be looking at the smaller communities for decentralization and I have a small constituency.

Mr. Speaker, the communities of Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord have not been given any infrastructure facilities like arenas and community centers because of the population sizes in their communities, because they are small communities.

They have expressed their concern that the Government has not considered them for facilities because of the small population and it should not be the case. Although they are small communities, they should have the adequate facilities like the community centers and different social/public buildings because they need them for their people.

We should not think of them as small communities; they should be allowed to have the same kind of facilities that the larger communities do. When the Government provides facilities like swimming pools, community centers and other facilities, what do you need to do to have these in the communities?

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluttuutiaq, Minister Ng.

Member's Statement 360 – 1(6): Congratulate Nunavut Winter Games Participants

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my colleague, Minister Thompson in congratulating all of Nunavut representatives for their participation and efforts at the 2003 Canada Winter Games.

In particular, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize two young men from Cambridge Bay, who participated on the badminton team; Jonathan Eater and Quinton Crocket, who is the only Nunavut National Artistic Program Performer.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure all Members will join me in thanking all participants for proudly representing their home communities and our Territory to the best of their abilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Ng. Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit Center, Mr. Tootoo.

Member's Statement 361 – 1(6): Congratulate Iqaluit Music Society for Show

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services for reminding us what Member Statements are for.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to salute the cast and crew of the Iqaluit Music Society's recent production of "Anything Goes", directed by Brad Mac Isaac and music director, Colleen Walsh. This musical was more than just a show; it captured the imagination of the audience by bringing back a different era to life.

Mr. Speaker, Anything Goes was performed at the Inuksuk High School. Over 600 people came and watched the three performances. A total of roughly \$4,500 was raised in donations at the door and through the canteen. And these proceeds will be supporting the Inuksuk High School's Band Concert Trip to Halifax, where they will be attending next month, the Atlantic Band Festival. Proceeds will go to the violin program here in Iqaluit.

Mr. Speaker, I've talked in this House about the valuable nature of music programs in our schools. Music programs do a tremendous amount of good for our youth and they should be thoroughly supported.

The Iqaluit Music Society has contributed greatly to this community over the years. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank all the sponsors who made this performance possible. I am looking forward to future endeavours by the Music Society who perform such high quality entertainment for Iqaluit.

Before asking all Members to join me in saluting the cast and crew Mr. Speaker, I would also like to advise the Music Society if they plan on doing another performance, they may want to look at doing something that's singing in an airplane and then Mr. Speaker, I am sure that Minister Picco, who likes to sing on airplanes would be wanting to cast for one of the lead performers in that performance.

Again, I'd like to ask all Members to join me in congratulating the Iqaluit Music Society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Member's Statements. The Member for Kugluktuk. Mr. Havioyak.

Member's Statement 362 – 1(6): Bathurst Inlet Road and Port

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say that I support those people who will be building the Bathurst Inlet Port. There are many mining companies in the Kitikmeot Region even close to my community of Kugluktuk and also in Bathurst Inlet.

We have a lot of mining companies operating in our region. They'll be providing a lot of jobs and opportunities for our communities. I support mining companies but they have to make sure that they look after our land and waters.

We have a lot of young people who are unemployed and we would like to see them be employed in those mining companies. I would like to see more opportunities for young people.

I think once they build that road and port for those mining companies, I think that they will provide a lot of job opportunities to our communities. They will be supplying fuel and food and materials to those mining companies from that port area.

Recently, I heard that Izok Lake may not be going this time around because of low metal prices, but today, before they stop that port and road I would like to support the mining companies by building that port and road for the mining companies.

I would like the Federal Government and Government of Nunavut to support these endeavours because they create a lot of jobs for our communities and for Nunavut. We all know that more and more people are coming into our communities but it's not only here in Kitikmeot.

Once they start hauling fuel, and I think all the fuel prices will drop once those oils start coming from somewhere else so that our oil and gas price will go down once they start supplying gas to those areas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Haviyak. Members' Statements. Member for Toonoonik. Mr. Nutarak.

Member's Statement 363 – 1(6): Social Worker Needed in Pond Inlet

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I represent the community of Pond Inlet and we have had no social worker for the past three months. And we are already hearing requests for this person and we need social workers in the communities because they do various jobs within their capacity.

So, during the Question Period, I will be asking the Minister responsible in regards to social worker issues and to let this serve as notice that we have not had a Social worker for the past three months and what are his plans to replace them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Nutarak. Members' Statements. Member for Baffin South. Mr. Akesuk.

Member's Statement 364 – 1(6): Junior C Hockey Game in Rankin Inlet

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, just before I begin, I would like to congratulate my youngest child, Okalik Akesuk, as it is her birthday and I would like to wish her a happy birthday.

On the weekend, there were some individuals who came here for a hockey trial at the Junior C Level and they will be playing hockey in Rankin Inlet. There were quite a few players from Cape Dorset and there were five who came from my community selected to play at the Junior C hockey challenge in Rankin Inlet and they will be coming over here at Toonik Tyme.

These hockey players have been playing since they were Midgets and they have won quite a few tournaments and they are all under 21 years old. There were five from Cape Dorset and I would like to congratulate them for being selected to the Junior C hockey for the Baffin Region.

They are Niviaqsaq Saila, Jamesie Alariak, Johnny-boo Ashevak, Peter Peterloosie, Ashevak Tauki and I would like to congratulate those individuals for being selected to the Junior C Hockey Challenge and I would like to tell them to do their best as they will be representing the Baffin region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Akesuk. Members' Statements. Member Statements. Returning to Orders of the Day. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Tunnunig, Mr. Nutarak.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize someone in the Gallery. Sometimes as Members of the Legislature, we visit with each other at night. I am not even recognizing my grandson and the Members have never heard the name of my grandson, especially Enoki.

I usually only call him "Irngutaq", but I would like to recognize Brad Nutarak, who is behind me, who is my first grandson. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Welcome to the Nunavut Legislature. You will be sitting at your grandfather's seat someday. Welcome. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery, Member for Uquqmmiut, Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize the Mayor of Qikiqtarjuaq, Lootie Thomasie. He was involved in the amendments to the Hamlet Act and he is here for that reason and perhaps, to do some other business, but I would like to recognize him.

And I would like to give my appreciation to Manito Thompson for having him and other Mayors speak to the proposed amendments to the Hamlet Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Welcome to the Gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize someone today. I guess it is Inuinnaqtun day today. I would like to recognize the Inuinnaqtun Interpreters from Kugluktuk and from the Kitikmeot, John Komak, and Henry Ohokanoak. James Paneok is not at the booth at the moment, but I would like to thank them all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Welcome Inuinnaqtun Interpreters. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. The Member for Amittuq, Mr. Irgittuq.

Mr. Irgittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I recognized an individual. I would also like to recognize someone again today. I've recognized people for two days in a row, which is a record for me. I would like to recognize my good friend. This is the first time that I have heard Brad Nutarak.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Irgittuq. Welcome again Brad. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Returning to Orders of the Day. Item 6. Oral Questions. Oral Questions. The Member for Nanulik. Mr. Arvaluk.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 359 – 1(6): Update on Economic Development to Non-Decentralized Communities

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also have a cold. I would like to ask the Mr. Premier. He had stated before that non-decentralized communities will be assisted, will be developed, or given some economic opportunities. The Premier has been saying that for the past three years.

I would like to ask the Premier whether there have been any plans put in place, or are any economic development opportunities for those non-decentralized communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we are doing is an ongoing process at this time. After we have completed some mandate items we have to do, we will vigorously start the economic development for those non-decentralized communities.

I would like to inform the Member that there has been a caribou hunt that takes place every year in Coral Harbour. What we are trying to do is to try to bring about a place to tan hides; this is an issue that we are trying to re-visit.

What we do is we try to recognize something that we could do in a non-decentralized community, and to talk with development corporations to assist those communities in those non-decentralized communities for economic development.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you for the response Mr. Premier. Has the Premier made any estimates as to how long it would take to implement economic development in those non-decentralized communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot really answer the Member at this time when this will be completed. What we are doing is we are trying to find out what kinds of development can be done for those non-decentralized communities.

I will be going overseas after the session is over to try to find out what kinds of markets we can provide to them from the non-decentralized communities.

After finding out from the visit, we will be perhaps be going to Chesterfield Inlet as we have a development corporation, and they will look to see what kinds of things we can do for those communities such as Chesterfield Inlet and other non-decentralized communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk. Mr. Havioyak.

Question 360 – 1(6): Update on Road and Port in Bathurst Inlet

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Sustainable Development.

As I stated earlier, if and when this port and road is approved from the Federal Government, I would like to ask him at this time if that road and port to Bathurst Inlet, and whether the approval has been given by the federal government to start work on it.

I would like to know what the status of this proposed project is today and if the construction is going to be beginning in the immediate future. When will the construction commence? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Havioyak. Minister of Sustainable Development. Mr. Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to thank the Member for Kugluktuk on his question.

We are currently working and having discussions on this issue. We have also set aside some funds to initiate these projects. The Nunavut Impact Review Board is currently doing the review and we are waiting for written responses from the Federal Government.

We want to know exactly what's happening on this issue and we are doing a review currently. But at this point we are waiting for a written response from the Federal

Government. We want to initiate this project but with the current prices of minerals, we have to do a careful review of the viability of the project.

There are quite a number of things we have to do at this point but they will have my ongoing support in order to create these viable economic opportunities. We will also look at the environment to make sure that there are no negative impacts to the wildlife and the land.

At the current time, we have made a submission to the Federal Government and we are awaiting a written response in respect to the proposal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Olayuk. Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister for your response.

The money we are going to be using for the construction of the Bathurst Inlet Port project, if I understood clearly, there is going to be some environment studies going on in the future. I have heard the federal government is looking at the proposals in the region, so I would like to know if there is an update available.

I want to ask you how much money is put aside for the construction of that road and port project. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Mr. Speaker, with the assessment done through cooperation with the land claim organizations, we have set aside 6 million dollars for the environmental studies. Out of this total, there were \$3 million dollars set aside from Nunavut, both private and GN funds and \$3 million dollars from the Federal Government.

We have not put aside any other funds for the additional years, but we are looking at \$216 million as the total cost if this was initiated and completed. It is quite expensive, but we still have to have ongoing negotiations with the Federal Government and with the other organizations.

We have not set aside any money for this specific project until we have the assessment or the review completed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Supplementary. Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And thank you, Minister. I thought I understood that you had put money aside for the construction; I guess I misunderstood so thank you for clarifying that.

My last question is, if and when that road and port project is approved, are there going to be some Employment Opportunities? Are you looking at some turning opportunities for the construction part or for those people who are going to be building the road up to Bathurst Inlet?

And are you looking at some training programs that can be part of this project if and when it goes ahead? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have not set aside any funds at this point for the construction phase. We are going to have the assessment by the Federal Government completed before anything goes ahead. This hinges on that approval.

In regards to training, it is very important and there is a lot of potential for mining development in Nunavut, so we have to review the industry from the entire territorial perspective.

I think, perhaps in November that we can table a report. And the Member for Kugluktuk and other Members have had ongoing questions and concerns about making training opportunities available in the mining sector for the people of Nunavut.

Possibly in November, we will then have the mining strategy ready. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your final supplementary, Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I forgot one more matter. As the Minister first answered, he is consulting with the other groups.

Who are you working with at this time? The Minister alluded to the federal government; are there other governments or organizations that he is consulting on this matter? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the road to Bathurst, the road and port project to Bathurst Inlet, there are representatives from all over Nunavut.

We have people representing the Kitikmeot Corporation, Nuna Logistics, Inmet Mining and the Hamlet of Cambridge Bay, Hamlet of Kugluktuk and also our Nunavut Government representatives from the Departments of Community Government and Transportation and also Sustainable Development.

They are currently working together with the Federal Government on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Question 361 – 1(6): Declaration Forms Translated into Inuktitut

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister for Community Government and Transportation.

As a Member of the Legislative Assembly, we went to Nuuk, Greenland and two other communities on a fact finding mission. From what I found out, the two communities that I represent are rather close to the community of Nuuk, Sisimiut and Ilulissat and it's approximately an hour flight from my community to Greenland.

We're that close. The two communities that I represent do not have economic opportunities and if we're looking at developing communities or specifically my two communities that I represent, we could possibly think about chartering.

When we were returning to Canada, we had to fill out a declaration. We had to fill out an immigration and customs declaration forms in English. I am sure that we have to go through all this bureaucracy; we're going to be moving from one country to another.

My question is if you're going to be bringing back anything from a foreign country and if you did not declare some of the items that you bought, is there a possibility that they might be confiscated or you might be charged?

These declaration forms are just in English. My question is, is it possible for the declaration forms to be translated into Inuktitut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Community Government and Transportation, Ms. Thompson.

Hon. Manitok Thompson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to foreign travel, it's the usual custom to declare what you've bought from a foreign country if you're going back to Canada or the U.S. or any place.

Those declaration forms are not the responsibility of the Government of Nunavut. It is the responsibility of the Federal Government. What I can do is look into it to see if there's a possibility of getting them translated.

If the Federal Government could recognise our language than maybe they could provide funding for the translation of these forms.

Mr. Speaker, I will look into it and I'd like to state again that it's not part of our responsibility as Community Government and Transportation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree with her response. But can you assure me that you will be working with the Federal Government because of course the country of Greenland and Broughton Island and Clyde River are one hour apart by air.

Because of our close proximity, there is a very good opportunity where we can trade between Greenland and Canada. Can you work with the Federal Government on this? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Thompson.

Hon. Manitoq Thompson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If the Federal Government is willing to work with me, it would go much easier. I'll try to work with them. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for Quttiktuq. Ms. Williams.

Question 362 – 1(6): Criteria for Arenas Based on Population

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated earlier the smaller communities lose out in a lot of things. My question is to the Community Government Minister.

I do know that the Government is not just full of money, so, I am just wondering if this per capital basis is the standard of criteria. When was that devised for the Government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Community Government and Transportation. Ms. Thompson.

Hon. Manitoq Thompson (interpretation): The Government has not forgotten the smaller communities. I can use Kimmirut as an example, although it is a smaller community, we were able to open an arena. There are health centers and different agencies in the communities, but I do understand the Member's concern.

The standards and criteria for the Government were carried over from the Government we had before, but with Nunavut, we have tried to make them more for Nunavut. And so, this way, smaller communities would be able to request, according to these kinds of standards of criteria, but with the lack of money, we cannot always attend to their concerns. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask my question again. I wasn't referring to Kimmirut; I am referring to the communities that I represent.

The standards that were devised by the Northwest Territories Government, I think that we have been using them for four years now. Has the Government of Nunavut updated this, as of December 2002 or are they still working on it? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Thompson.

Hon. Maniok Thompson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When she said that some of the smaller communities are losing out, I just used Kimmirut as an example. We have tried to update the standards so that the communities, by not using the per capita.

The priorities that we set with the Nunavut Government for housing and different types of infrastructures in the communities for health concerns, we had to prioritize those needs for Nunavummiut.

And so, the old standards and criteria, we try to keep away from them and try to focus on what the community needs are instead. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Supplementary. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do understand her response, but she did not respond to my question as to when the Government of Nunavut came up with the standards and criteria for capital projects in Nunavut.

When did they deal with capital issues as it relates to this summer, was it before February 2003 or after? When did the government start amending the standards and criteria? I brought this up because I have a letter that I can table if need be, in regards to this matter.

I do not think that they were updated as of February 2003, so I am asking when were they amended? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Thompson.

Hon. Maniok Thompson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I was the Minister for the Department of Public Works, when we first became the Nunavut Government, I advised the legislature about the capital project contracts and I also advised my departmental decision makers not to depend on the standards and criteria and to focus on the needs of the community instead.

That is what the Standing Committee decided and they were aware of this issue and if there is funding available for this type of allocation, then we would do it on an as needed basis only. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Final supplementary. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. She is probably not the only Minister responsible for projects. Perhaps the information needs to be given about the different standards and criteria that they are trying to implement at the community level. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Williams. Minister Thompson.

Hon. Manitok Thompson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes we do that always in our capacity as Ministers. We ensure that department staff are informed. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit Centre. Mr. Tootoo.

Question 363 – 1(6): Distribution of Health Fund

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier today, but before I get into my question, I would like to congratulate the Premier and his two counterparts in the Yukon and Northwest Territories for the success that they had in obtaining extra funding from the Federal Government for our health care.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to extend our thanks to Svend Robinson, who also raised the issue in the House of Commons and I believe who helped our case along. I know that Minister Picco met with him as well and made him well aware of the circumstances and challenges that we face up here.

Mr. Speaker, my question is, at the time, and there is a press release that was issued on February 20th stating that there would be a floor of 60 million dollars for a special health fund for the territories.

I would like to ask the Premier how that money will be divided up. Will it be divided up evenly at about 20 million dollars per territory and over what period? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Premier Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we agreed to was that there was a floor of \$60 million dollars to be divided up equally amongst the three territories. As to the length of the agreement, that is still under discussion.

The shorter the period, it will be beneficial for us. That is what we are discussing right now with the Federal Government. We made a deadline that we would have an agreement on the details by the end of this month.

So, we are trying to conclude the discussions and hopefully we will be able to complete them successfully. We agreed that the minimum that the territories will get, it will be 60 million dollars divided equally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I guess a key word in that whole thing is the floor. I am sure our Health Minister would indicate that would be in the basement, the money that we need and that he needs.

I would like to ask the Premier, what are the chances of getting additional funding on top of that \$60 million dollars? And if that is just the floor, how do we move up closer to the main floor, the ceiling of funding that we need and you require for Health in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Paul Okalik: Thank you. What we established is a special fund on top of the per capita monies that we are getting in the general CHST transfers that are being transferred to all Governments. I should tell you that amount is only \$3 million dollars a year.

This is in addition to that monies that we are getting. We also open the door for additional monies for specific healthcare needs that we may have in the future, and available technologies that we may want to work on like Telehealth. Additional monies that we can get from the Federal Government, that is still open. A special fund for healthcare that is the minimum that we would get. As to exactly how much money that would work out on any given year, is still up for discussion.

We are hopeful that we can get the most of that 60 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Premier indicated that this is additional funding on top of the per capita funding through the THST, I understand that one of the big things that all three Premiers raised down there and there was concurrence from all the southern Premiers, that the per capita funding formula is not adequate and does not suit our needs in the North, in all three Territories.

This is an acknowledgement of the fact that it does not work for us. Can the Premier indicate if there is going to be any move to address those same per capita funding issues in other areas, other than healthcare? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Paul Okalik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that is another issue that we discussed with the Prime Minister and there will be longer term discussions for other areas where per capita funding just does not work for the North. There have been other precedents that were set, like the Transportation money that we received last year, infrastructure money. That set the floor of one percent of the overall \$2 billion dollar fund.

So those things are happening. This was a good precedent on health. Hopefully, more social programs will also reflect that in the future. Those discussions will be continued. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Last supplementary. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Premier had indicated in the beginning that there are more long term discussions going on. Can he commit to updating this House as to how those discussions are going? I know that this per capita funding is an issue that we have raised in the past in the way of infrastructure funding, and things like that.

I know that all Members of this House would agree and support our position on that. Can the Minister commit to providing Members of this House with regular updates on how things are going on per capita funding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Paul Okalik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I remain optimistic. Once those discussions conclude, hopefully, while we are in Session, I can inform the House of the terms of the agreements that are concluded, so yes I will continue to do that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. The Member for Tunnuniq. Mr. Nutarak.

Question 364 - 1(6): Social Worker Needed in Pond Inlet

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you. My question is directed to the Minister of Health. In Pond Inlet, they have not had a social worker for three months.

There was in training there temporarily and the Clyde River social worker does come in periodically. Since Pond Inlet does not have a social worker, is he working on that or is he taking the normal course or is he considering it as an urgent issue? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the issue around staffing the social workers has been ongoing. It is something similar to the nursing situation and that is a shortage of social workers.

Mr. Speaker, we have, under the Department of Health, retained the right and the ability to hire nurses, recruit for nurses and so on. Social workers, Mr. Speaker, are still under the guidance of HR, Human Resources.

Like any other position within the Government except for teachers, HR facilitates, advocates, advertises and so on for the positions. What has happened in this position in particular, I just want to explain it, to make sure that we are clear on it.

Mr. Speaker, HR facilitates the recruitment of staff for the Government and in this case, since the position has been vacant, the Department of Health and Social Services goes to HR to look. We have a vacant position; here we need to act on it.

And we have been acting on it on an urgent basis. My understanding, Mr. Speaker, is that the position closes this week and it has been advertised, it closes this week. Then, using the week after the closing date of the position, the applicants are all reviewed, they are screened, reference checks are done, and then an offer would be made.

Mr. Speaker, that process takes about three to four weeks and we would hope to be in a position at that time to be able to put someone in Pond Inlet. So, the Member is correct, we are, received right now, working on having a position, a full-time position in Pond.

At the same time, we have had someone address some of the social work issues that have arisen in the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the growing population in the community and the high birthrate in the community, Iqaluit is a city and a centre for the Nunavut Government.

The social workers, are they also hired according to the number of people in the communities? Can you please respond to that? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member makes a good point and yesterday in a question, the Member for Amittuq asked a similar question and there is one at the staffing level that is used at a community. In the past, the Deputy Member knows, we tried to have at least one social worker or two nurses in a community.

There is no formula today dictating, stating, what should be the correct PY, person year of employment for nurses, social workers or for that matter, many of the positions that we staff in communities.

What we have tried to do is look at the workload in those communities. For example, if there is a heavy social worker workload in the community. In that case, Mr. Speaker, we would try to have more PY's put there.

Again, it is all cost contingent on having the available dollars for the different positions that you would try to hire for and at the same time, Mr. Speaker, how you augment the different resources at the community so that you would have, for example, a social worker with the mental health worker, with the CHR, with alcohol and drug workers.

Other people who would be in the similar role, lending interdependence forth, that is the model that we have moved towards. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Supplementary. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Regarding the social worker in Pond Inlet. The social worker is off right now and there's over 1000 people in Pond Inlet.

Social workers in the communities, and especially in the larger communities, do have a heavy work load I believe. I think the best way is to have two social workers at least in the larger communities, so that they can keep up with the work load.

As he said, there's no formula devised, and I think this is the time that he can start devising on a population basis. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the Member. I guess the catch 22 in a situation like this, is if I put in a formula and say that for every five hundred people I should have one social worker or two nurses, then how do I have the financial resources to be able to do that.

That's part of the problem. I can say it but there's no point in saying it if it's not being realistic. That's the situation that we find ourselves in as a government. Not just this government but many jurisdictions are in a similar position where you look at health and social services.

I can say to the Member, Mr. Speaker, internally through the department, we have been looking at work loads in communities as well as mixing and matching where we can, positions to match some of the heavy responsibilities that are out there for the positions and the staff.

Some of these positions, Mr. Speaker, as the Member is quiet aware, are quite stressful. This afternoon in this house, for the first time since April 1, 1999, we will be debating the issue around suicide.

One of the issues there is do we have enough support in the communities. This is part, Mr. Speaker, of the issue that the Member is talking about which is a good point about having some type of formula for this. But if I have a formula, do I have the luxury of having the dollars to put the positions in place?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Final supplementary. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Already, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have anything else to add to my question, and he mentioned that he'll look into the communities that are lacking social workers.

It's obvious that that position will not be filled within the next few weeks. I just wanted to thank you for looking into the social worker problem that we have according to the comments that he's just made.

The Minister of Health and Social Services, I would recommend that he check with Human Resources whether they're working on this at this time or not. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): That was just a comment. Thank you. Item 6. Oral Questions. Mr. Arvaluk.

Question 365 - 1(6): Small Business Grants for Construction

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Public Works and Services.

We know that some of the communities who have very small businesses in the communities do some construction work. Sometimes it's impossible for them to buy the material and build buildings at the same time because they have to wait for the material.

The small communities are contracted out by different businesses to help them with the construction. Is that the case? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): We have a quorum at this time. We can resume. There is an Oral Question to the Department of Public Works and Services. Mr. Kattuk.

Hon. Peter Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps the Member of the Legislative Assembly can repeat his question.

Speaker (interpretation): Can you clarify that question please, Mr. Arvaluk?

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that you recognize that this is not a supplementary question.

I asked if the Government of Nunavut and the Hamlet municipalities still have a practice where small businesses undertake the construction phase so that they would not have to finance the entire construction costs but they would help the small businesses do the order for the materials.

It was known that they could not do both with the limited financing that they had. Is that still the case in Nunavut?

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Kattuk.

Hon. Peter Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will look into this because I do not have anything to respond at this point. I can only state that I believe that this is still the practice, but I will look into it. For the Members' information, I will take that as notice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): When you are just going to repair a house in a small business, which is not buying a house, does this practice apply to all other regions? Do you provide that assistance to all?

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Kattuk.

Hon. Peter Kattuk (interpretation): The question you raise, in regards to the capital projects that the Government of Nunavut is responsible, I can answer that this is still the case, but I cannot speak for the other contracts. I will take his question as notice.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Are you saying that you are going to use monies from the government, if I understand you correctly, for example, the housing corporation and the power corporation can contract out the work to a small business if they are not going to do the actual new construction of the facility? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Kattuk.

Hon. Peter Kattuk (interpretation): I will have to look into this matter. I will take it as notice and I will respond to his question at a later time. I will look into his last question and take it as notice. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): He will get back to you on your question and return to your oral question.

Returning to Orders of the Day. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk. Mr. Haviyok.

Question 366 – 1(6): Plans for Kitikmeot Boarding Home in Yellowknife

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): I have a question here to the Minister of Health and Social Services.

In regards to the first item, I would like to thank him. On February 9th, he went to Yellowknife to see the Kitikmeot Boarding Home to inspect it. I know that we have been asking questions about that particular boarding home for quite some time.

I am just curious, and today I would like to ask the Minister since he has inspected it, what his plans are for the boarding home in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to add that, first of all, I think we were all very pleased with some of the issues raised by the Parliamentarians in the House of Commons including Mr. Robinson on the health issue.

I am sure that the Premier, as one really expected and accepted that type of health care and I would like to thank Mr. Tootoo for bringing that up.

Mr. Speaker, we did have an opportunity on February 9th to review the situation regarding the boarding home in Yellowknife. That is part of the larger review of the boarding homes. We also had an opportunity to the Boarding Home as mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, the process right now, is that we have a long-term lease in place in that facility and we would like to be able to move in a direction, which would give us the level of comfort for the patients who are going through Yellowknife.

And I think it is important to point out, Mr. Speaker, that that facility was put in place in 1988 and we have seen, over the preceding year, an increase of around 30-35% more patients going through and staying at that facility in Yellowknife.

The facility does not lend itself to expansion; it has not received any type of expansion other than the upstairs portion where there were, at one point, living quarters and they have been renovated into a couple of extra rooms.

We realize that there is some concern with the size of the facility and in the larger context of reviewing all of the boarding homes; we would be looking at Yellowknife.

And I am pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that through the Health Committee, which the Member is a Member of, there have been recommendations to look at the boarding homes and we have done that.

We have a new Boarding Home in Ottawa; the Members here in this facility will know that in 2000, that we had only the Rotel in Ottawa. Now we have our own boarding home.

There has actually been an expansion there. We put a brand new boarding home in Edmonton and we are in the process of putting a brand new boarding home in Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Manitok Thompson: Thank you!

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you Minister Thompson, you are correct on the situation. Mr. Speaker, we need also to be able to look at the other ones.

And in context with the new extended health facility that we are putting in Rankin Inlet, as well as in Cambridge Bay, there may be an opportunity to look at the boarding homes in those two communities.

And if that is the case, with the boarding homes in both those communities, will we need less people going to Yellowknife and then we have to see how much space we need.

So, that is part of the evaluation and the process that we have to look at. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought he was going to speak about the Kitikmeot Boarding Home, I wanted to thank you but it sounds like you were just talking about something else.

I forgot one item, I want to thank the Minister and his assistant, Keith Best; and he has been looking into that building as well as Kitikmeot Boarding Home. I want to thank him for looking into that matter for me.

I am wondering after you have inspected the Yellowknife Boarding Home, when will we be able to find out when it will become a standardized building? Today, there are many people coming in from Cambridge Bay and Kugluktuk. And sometimes they run out of space in that boarding home.

After your next budget, I was wondering when will we be able to hear any news of expansions or a new facility based on your review of the facility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Mr. Best will be with us this afternoon to debate on the suicide issues that I know the Members appreciate it. Mr. Best, at the Auditor General's hearing and the

Public Council being able to be through the entire meetings and having an opportunity to review the financial situation.

Mr. Speaker, on the specific issue surrounding when the review will be finished in Yellowknife, again, Mr. Speaker, that is something that myself and Mr. Best have been looking at.

I would hope to have an independent analysis done of both of those facilities. I would probably look at the opportunities through our RFP to do that. As Mr. Ng has pointed out, by waving around papers in Legislature today, that it is important to be able to have an understanding of not only letters being sent, but of information being provided to the Members as well as the paper report that the Member is asking for.

I would hope to be able to do that probably within the next six to eight weeks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Question 367 – 1(6): Update on Funding for Inuktitut Instruction/Curriculum

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to ask the Premier first, because I do not want to make a mistake. I want to ask you a question concerning the Department of Education. Is that possible in this case? Thank you.

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

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you. I can try to respond to his question because in the past I have had a chance to be responsible for education and I have always enjoyed it.

Based on my knowledge and experience, if I can answer his question, I will try. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned earlier about the Department of Education, I hope that you have noted that this is my first question.

The Inuktitut teachers have to use their own instruction materials for the classrooms in their community and there is not enough funding available for them to produce their own curriculum for Inuktitut instruction.

I think they do a lot of work and they need to change the subjects into Inuktitut, which we do not think about on a daily basis as politician or as a government. What has the

department done to help the Inuit teachers to produce more Inuktitut curriculum? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Premier.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can respond by saying that our elders have been helping in producing Inuktitut teaching material. We have been able to have annual meetings where the elders deal with terminology and other programming.

We have been successful in obtaining cultural program funding for elders and we have been working with the Department of Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth to come up with the funding available for cultural programs to teach the elementary school students.

Trying to produce an Inuktitut curriculum is a very comprehensive task and we have been trying to provide the funding for the teachers' centres. We have tried to provide funding for Inuktitut curriculum so that they can be used for Inuit and non-Inuit for the Inuktitut as a second language material. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In respect to this answer, I already know that there is some work being done at the learning centers. But what I am talking about, to use one of my communities as an example, is that I have noticed some of the teachers have to produce their own material by translating them and teaching the students from the material that they have.

Many times the Inuit teachers are not working closely with the elders and I am not talking about the curriculum that the elders have developed, but they are using their own terminology that they are teaching their students.

I know that there are cultural programs using our elders but what I am asking is in the smaller communities, when they are in a situation where they have to produce their own instruction material by translating them from English because there is no academic material in Inuktitut. I am referring to actual materials that are produced locally, and not the ones that are produced regionally.

Are there any plans for producing these curriculums locally? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Premier.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is what we are trying to accomplish at this time by producing an Inuktitut curriculum that will be used Nunavut wide.

The Minister of Education and the Minister of Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth had set aside some funding to produce Inuktitut material to be taught within the schools so that we can start teaching our Inuit students all year round from elementary to high school levels.

It can be taught as well to non-Inuit students who want to learn Inuktitut as a second language. Again this applies to all schools in Nunavut where the people require learning Inuktitut as a second language and we are consulting the regions as we speak.

We support this initiative and we will continue to work hard at it. We want to reach a stage where all subjects and all materials are available to be taught in Inuktitut. We are presently consulting on what other changes we need to make. We are in the planning stages of producing the Inuktitut curriculum. That is where we are at this point.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Supplementary, Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand your response and it is clear.

Although you have plans for producing Inuktitut curriculum, one of the major problems that we have is our dialectal differences. We have so many problems with our dialects. Although we are using one Inuktitut dialect, some times it is very different in other dialects when it is read.

One word can mean a very different thing in another dialect. The communities I represent have told me that they want to produce their own materials in their own dialect so will you be able to provide us the funding?

I think that is the appropriate approach. Our dialects will be lost if we have a standardized Inuktitut curriculum and it will contribute towards our losing Inuktitut. Are you looking into this as well so that we can produce materials in our own dialect? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Premier.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are providing that type of work at this time and I want it understood that it will be a costly exercise. We are in full support and I want the Members to realize that it is a complex matter.

We are still directing the process and to date we have outlined the skeletal regime, but we have not even started to look at the meat required to fill it out. The details are being worked on at this time.

I appreciate the Member telling this House about dialectal difference concerns emanating from his communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Final supplementary, Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I made a Members Statement earlier on today. When our children are five years old, they start their school career in kindergarten. Their lives start from the time that they start school.

Have you looked into the issue about the lives of the children that enter into the school and for the individual to be able to continue on with their education or their careers? Have you thought about that type of thing when you are doing the review of the development of the curriculum for Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Premier.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, this is being dealt with by those who have more experience in this regard. It is being looked after by the elders at this time. The elders know what they are doing, and know their culture; they are developing these types of curriculum.

That is the stage we are at right now. Some times it is very difficult for those children who enter the school system. We try our very best to provide long term social development for them.

I realize that we cannot lose our language, and we try to think of that. The school system can be used to provide those learning endeavours for the school children. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Question Period is now over. Returning to Orders of the Day. Item 7. Written Questions. Written Questions. Ms. Williams.

Item7: Written Questions

Written Question 006 – 1(6): Victims Assistance Funding

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a written question. It is regarding the Victims Assistance Fund. The questions that I have are

1. What are the specific funding guidelines and/or policies for funding projects out of the Victims Assistance Funds, pursuant to the *Nunavut Victims of Crime Act*?
2. The other question that I have is who is eligible for funding under the Victim Assistance Fund?
3. Who is the Victims Assistance Co-ordinator?

4. Who are the members of the Victims Assistance Committee?
5. As of March 2, 2003, what projects or proposals have been funded in the fiscal year 2002-03 to date? What was the value of each funding award?
6. What GN-Funded compensation program exists to financially compensate individual victims of crime who incur direct financial costs as a result of a crime?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Would the Member please provide us with a copy of her Written Questions? Returning to Orders of the Day. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Petitions. Item 11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Item 13. Tabling of Documents.

I am sorry that I skipped a number. Item 12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills. Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Item 14. Notices of Motions. Item 15. Notices of Motion for the First Reading of Bills. Mr. Premier.

Item 15: Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills

Bill 28 – An Act to Amend the Young Offenders Act and Other Acts in Consequence - Notice

Hon. Paul Okalik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, March 7th, 2003, that I shall move that Bill 28, an Act to Amend the Young Offenders Act and Other Acts in Consequence be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Notices of Motions for the First Reading of Bills. Minister Picco.

Bill 29 – An Act to Amend the Nunavut Power Utilities Act and Certain Other Acts in Consequence - Notice

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, March 7, 2003, I shall move that Bill 29, an Act to Amend the Nunavut Power Utilities Act and Certain Other Acts in Consequence be read for the first time at that time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Picco. 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 23 and Bill 24. Ministers' statement 95-1(6). Tabled Document 030-1(6), with Mr. Iqaqrialu in the Chair.

Before we begin Committee of the Whole, we will break for 20 minutes.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15.21 p.m. resumed at 15.53 p.m.*

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

Chairperson (Mr. Iqaqrialu) (interpretation): Thank you. I would like to call the meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following items to deal with Bill 23 and Bill 24, but we have a problem there. We have the Minister Statements 095-1(6). Tabled Document 030-1(6). What is the wish of the Committee? Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to begin with the two items, Minister Statement 095-1(6) and also Tabled Document 030-1(6). Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Williams. Are we in agreement that we first deal with Minister Statement 095-1(6) and Tabled Document 030-1(6)? Are we in agreement?

I would now like to ask Minister Picco to make his Opening Remarks. Thank you, Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if I may, I would like to go to the witness box and the witness chair and ask my staff to join me there. And with that, I would begin with my opening comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Picco. Are we in agreement that Mr. Picco and his officials go up to the witness table. Are we in agreement? Go ahead. Thank you very much. Please introduce your officials, Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all I would like to begin by saying who's with me today. I have the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department of Health and Social Services on my immediate left, Mr. Abraham Tagalik. On my immediate right is the Acting Deputy Minister of the Department of Health and Social Services, Mr. Keith Best.

Mr. Chairman, we are very please today to be able to sit in the Committee. I believe this is a first for the Government of Nunavut. I would suggest to you Mr. Chairman, that the number one health issue facing Nunavummiut is the issue of suicide and mental health across our territory.

Since April 1, 1999, since Nunavut began, we have seen over 100, Mr. Chairman, I am speaking now from memory; I have no written speaking notes. We are seeing, Mr. Chairman, over 100 suicides since April 1, 1999.

That's not acceptable. Mr. Chairman, the Government of Nunavut has begun since April 1, 1999 and myself as Minister of Health and Social Services an aggressive campaign about the de-normalization processes of suicide.

There has been yeomen's service done by the Department of Health with people like Caroline Anawak who, tirelessly and through much sacrifice, travelled to many communities throughout Nunavut, dealing with the issue.

We have several front line workers on the ground in every community in Nunavut, Mr. Chairman, who deal with the issue of suicide every day. Mr. Chairman, if there was one reason for suicide, then it would be easy to tackle the problem.

Each suicide is different and there's a range of issues why people take their own lives. Mr. Chairman, there's not one Member in this House who is not affected or has not been touched by suicide.

Not one. Several Members have brought up Members' Statements, have discussed the issue and talked about it. This is the first opportunity we have had as a Legislative Assembly, since April 1, 1999, to table the issue to look at and address it and I welcome that opportunity today.

I would hope, Mr. Chairman, at the end of this day, that suggestions, question, comments, concerns on how we together as elected leaders in Nunavut can help our communities, whether they be large or small, help deal with the issue of suicide.

Over the past several months, with Mr. Tagalik, and with Mr. Best, and in the audience you will also note that we have Andrew Tagak. He is the Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit specialist and coordinator for the Department of Health and Social Services, looking at suicide by region, by community, by gender, by age and by occurrence.

We are trying to ascertain, Mr. Chairman, and formulate common markers of suicide across Nunavut. And we have seen them Mr. Chairman they are there. We know that 80 percent of suicides are occurring with young males under the age of 25.

We know in many cases, people have been adopted out. We know in many cases where people have been adopted out, maybe the parents are older. These are common themes that we're seeing throughout suicides.

They're not the case in every case, but there are common markers. Are those indicators reasons for suicide?

Now, Mr. Chairman, I can talk about all of the things the Government of Nunavut has done since April 1st 1999, the workshops we have run, we have trained literally hundreds of people throughout Nunavut for post-prevention, intervention programs with suicide.

Mr. Chairman, we have worked with young people and old people, we have gathered people together in every Region of this territory.

In your home community, Mr. Chairman, as you know, we have run programs out of Clyde River with unilingual people, bilingual people, older people, and elders and so on,

again, in the area of Mental Health, Mental Wellness, Suicide Prevention and Intervention.

The Crisis Line operates across Nunavut with a 1-800 number. There are many mechanisms in place and yet, Mr. Chairman, we have not been able to stem the tides of suicides.

Some of the information, Mr. Chairman that we have been looking at and again, I want to make this clear, Mr. Chairman, I want to make it clear that across Nunavut, we are only 26,000 people.

There is not a family here in this House, in our communities that has not been affected by our suicides. It is a very emotional subject and one of the Members said, over the last couple of days, the fear of talking about suicide.

Information, statistics, and so on, demonstrate some say that talking about suicides is one of the most proactive ways of dealing with it.

The discussion and debate that we will have here today, Mr. Chairman, and I hope committee recommendations to me as Minister of Health and to your Government, will be part and parcel of that.

Quickly, Mr. Chairman, I would like to go over some of the indications and indicators and then give the Members an opportunity to speak to the issue.

As your Minister of Health and Social Services, there is not a day that goes by that we do not, in my Office, get a call about an attempted suicide or a successful completion of a suicide.

Suicide has become so normal within our culture, within our society, within our territory, we are not shocked by suicides anymore. That is why we need to be able to denormalize the process without pointing fingers at people.

Now, Mr. Chairman, we know that some suicides may be the result of some mental illness. So, from all of the understanding, all the documentation, all the information that has been gathered, that has been assessed there, logistically, administratively, they have been put together.

This does not seem to be the key indicator, mental illness. Some of the markers we have talked about, Mr. Tagak, starting on April 1st, in cooperation with one of these colleges in the Keewatin, will be looking at five or ten communities uniquely and talking to families anecdotally about some of the issues around suicide. What are the common markers?

We have still people out there and Mr. Chairman, as you know just recently, we hired an Inuk lady who is now the Communications and Suicide Specialist for the Department of Health and Social Services. She is on the job right now; she came to see me yesterday.

We have done a range of things, but we have not been successful. One of the things elders have told us over the past three and a half years is that suicides start in families. And how do we address the issue of suicide within families?

Ed Picco in Nunavut, Mr. Chairman, saying no more suicides in Nunavut is not going to work. The Government passing an act tomorrow is not going to work out suicide. Somebody does not walk around, Mr. Chairman, and decide, I am going to take my life today.

That is not what is happening. It is a progression. Whether we have the mental support, nursing stations, social workers, mental health workers in place, school councillors, teachers, RCMP, there are people on the ground in every community to help lend assistance.

And if you talked to 26 people in this room or the 19 or 18 or 17 Members of the Legislative Assembly, each one will have their own understanding on why there are suicides.

Each person has their own ideas. And when you have workshops where you bring people from across Nunavut together, like we will do, Mr. Chairman, in two months, we will have the National Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention Workshop Conference held here in Nunavut.

On the recommendations of Members like Mr. Iqittuq, from Amittuq, like the health Committee with Mr. Nutarak, there have been recommendations, why doesn't Nunavut have our own before that.

We are moving forward to do that where we have our own Nunavut wide suicide prevention conference, where we will bring survivors of suicide. That's the last thing I would like to bring up today unless the Members have an opportunity to discuss some of these Mr. Chairman.

Again I don't have hand outs. I am speaking from personal experience, from some of the things I've seen as the Minister of Health. I have with me, Dr. Best. As you know, his background is psychology and psychiatry.

We have with us, Mr. Tagalik, who's background is a person who lives here, who's been working in the department now for some time, who understands some of the issues. We have an Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit specialist on how we have tried to incorporate more Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit within the department on dealing with this specific issue.

Mr. Chairman, at the end of the day, at the end of this day, I would hope that the Members would be able to help me and help the people of Nunavut, and it's being broadcast live here today. People are watching this across the territory and will probably see it on simulcast.

I know that our friends from CBC are here and so on. This is the first time Mr. Chairman, since April 1, 1999, that this House has actually dedicated time to debate this issue and I hope that it goes on until 10:00 tonight or however long it takes.

I can tell you as your Minister of Health and Social Services that there has not been as disheartening an issue to have to deal with without being able to solve the problem than this. That's why we need the expertise of people around this table as well as getting support from the Members in the House with their personal experiences.

With that Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you and the Committee for this most important opportunity to debate probably the number 1 health care crisis in Nunavut. I look forward to your comments, questions and concerns raised by the Members. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Picco. Those are very wise words and very true.

Because of confrontations that come up at times, we are here to talk about the issue of suicide and social issues and I am very glad that you are able to disclose some of the comments that you have made today.

I would like to tell my colleagues, as the chairperson of the Committee of the Whole, that since we are going to be talking about the issue of suicide and suicide prevention, I will treat everybody on an equal basis.

There will be no Minister and no regular Member during this sitting of Committee of the Whole so that we can talk about this frankly and to the point. Every single Nunavummiut has been affected by the issue of suicide and it is time that we deal with it and look for solutions.

I just wanted to make those opening comments. Let us now be open and frank about this issue, from your heart, from your mind and let's talk of this problem. Of course, there are House rules.

As the Chair of the Committee I will have to abide by those rules. Before we begin, I would like to inform my colleagues that you have ten minutes to speak on the issue at hand. After everyone else has made their comments, we will then be able to go back to you to further discuss the issue.

I will give Mr. Iqittuq the first opportunity. The Member representing Amittuq. Mr. Iqittuq.

Mr. Iqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for giving us this opportunity. For the very first time since the creation of the Nunavut Government, since April 1, 1999, we are here to talk about the issue and possibly come up with

recommendations or action plans on this issue. I thank you for giving me this opportunity. I could make this a very long dialogue. If we are on the radio, I am very pleased that we have people out there who are listening.

On the issue of suicide, we are all at a precarious stage at this point. It is very hard to talk about the issue of suicide without having a negative effect. We are here to help you from those of us who have been affected by suicide, but we also have our weaknesses. As Inuit, we have a deep feeling of compassion for our fellow Nunavummiut.

The issue of suicide has had a very deep devastating impact, especially on the immediate family members, the parents of the individual, and the relatives. I am also one of those people who have been severely devastated because I have lost three immediate family members to suicide. I have seen the effect that it had on my parents.

Due to the sort of impact it has, we have to go through very difficult and challenging times. Since I have personally gone through this experience, and because there are far too many completed suicides in Nunavut I would like to talk about the effect it has on the survivors.

When we were coming here in that week, there were four suicides in Nunavut, in that short span of time. Thinking about those four and the effect it has on the family, we say, "This is too much, this is hopeless."

As you probably know I have been vocal on the issue of suicide, and so have some of my colleagues. I feel so helpless at times. We have to keep going, and we have to have hope.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to look at how we can decrease the numbers of suicides in Nunavut. I am very thankful that we have witnesses. During the Minister's Opening Remarks, he mentioned some of the possible reasons. Some I agree with, and some I do not agree with, especially a particular point about telling the truth. That was one word that I heard that I didn't like during his opening remarks.

He stated that we don't get shocked anymore when we hear about a suicide. From myself, personally, it is always surprising to me and it always shocks me. I think about the immediate family members.

Especially the families who have had a family member commit suicide for the very first time. That is the most devastating point in their lives. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to make those comments.

Why are there so many suicides today? Sometimes when you try to talk about it, there are things that prevent us from communicating. There are Members of the Legislative Assembly here who have lost family members or children just recently and we are afraid to be vocal about that point because we might hurt that individual.

Because they're still grieving, it's hard to talk about suicide when it's the most crucial time to talk about it. There are so many things we feel. We have to set aside our feeling of compassion, our feeling of love and discuss the issue of suicide because there are survivors who are at various degrees of grieving.

We cannot bring back those people who have committed suicide. We cannot bring those people back to life and make the family happy again. The feeling of compassion and love, especially myself, personally, it prevents me from being very frank and open about the issue.

We all know that there are very many Nunavummiut who are going through that process of grieving and lost, we're not the only ones. I wanted to make those comments but because I am running out of time, I don't want to rush through my comments.

There are many reasons why people commit suicide. Every single suicide has a reason, whether they did it intentionally or spontaneously. Maybe I am wrong saying that every single suicide has a reason for doing that action.

The age range in recent years is from 14-24 years old. This is where the most numbers are. In the past, in the 1980s, the suicide age range was higher but it's now becoming very obvious that there are teenagers in their early teens who are committing suicide.

I am just looking at the statistics here. Because I only have a very limited time to make my comments, I could just say that there are far too many suicides. If we look at 26 thousand people and that's only from the time that we created our territory.

If we look at the statistics, if we're 20 thousand plus, total population in Nunavut, and looking at the number of suicides here, we have a huge number of suicides if we look at it from that point of view. If we're 20,000 plus, in a southern community and if they have that many suicides they would have to take action because it would be in a crisis situation.

Mr. Chairperson, I will give the other Members an opportunity to make their comments. But I would like to touch up on some of the reasons and possibly solutions to decrease the number of suicides in the second round. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Iqittuq. We'll give each Member an opportunity and after that we could go back to you. I will leave the floor open this afternoon. I will give every Member an opportunity and then we will open up the floor for questions after general comments.

This is our first suicide discussion in Committee of the Whole and before we go ahead I would like to inform my colleagues that the Europeans have a different justice system and the Inuit have their own traditional custom.

In the European culture it was something that you were ashamed of and did not talk about. In the Inuk society that was the same case but we can't do that now because we're now in a crises situation.

If we're ashamed about it, if we don't talk about it, it's going to just keep going. For those of us who are survivors it's up to us now to protect the people of Nunavut. It is now up to us to review the situation and look at all the options that are available.

Following the comments that are made around this table and following the feedback that we get from the people of Nunavut, every single Nunavummiut should have an opportunity to draft possible recommendations. There are many people in Nunavut who have an opinion on this issue. Every single Nunavummiut has thought at one time or another that their child is possibly suicidal.

I'll leave it at that. I'll open up the floor for general comments. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very glad that we have an opportunity to speak about suicide today. We're not going to end it today and it's going to be an ongoing issue.

Although there are only 26,000 people, if there is one suicide that's too much. Because every living, breathing person shouldn't have to commit suicide because as a government we need to discuss the issue and as the Minister stated there's many studies that have been done about suicide.

I used to be a social worker for fourteen years and we had to work on it like we do today. We're still discussing the issue. When you have to travel to communities as a social worker you have to help other communities other than your own community. That is still happening.

This is a very stressful job for a social worker, it's like a band-aid solution for the real underlying problem that we have in suicide when you just send social workers to the communities to talk to people who are suicidal.

Also, the government employees who are social workers are not getting adequate support that they need from their government.

Their directors don't visit them in the communities to give them moral support although they talk to them over the phone. The social workers could be people who can be a life line to the people who need them.

The department has to provide an adequate number of social workers that they need. They provide for the nurses and the RCMP. In his opening remarks, the Minister stated that the number one health crisis is the issue that we're discussing.

If that's the case, there should be more than one social worker within the communities. The social workers could have a very big impact on helping and counselling people within the communities.

When you're trying to help your community and when you have to travel to another community to help them, and you stay only for a certain period of time, for a few days, it's not a long enough time to try to deal with the problems.

Mr. Chairman, I am trying to think of suggestions on how we can prevent suicide or how we can resolve the problems and how we can find out if there have been studies done to date on what kinds of reasons they have for committing suicide.

What can we do within the communities to help prevent suicide and how much support do we need to give the communities? As the Minister mentioned, there are many support systems in place in the communities who can help people who are in a crisis situation.

Perhaps we should start trying to find funding to help those people who are already in the communities and help them to provide adequate counselling training that they need. Also, it would be very hard for family members to try to counsel their own children in their own families.

There are some people who are already available in the communities who have been trained in suicide prevention. There are also church services or care givers from the church groups who are very well qualified to help the local people, who are volunteers.

How do we empower them so they can help prevent suicide? So, I am going to be supporting that, Mr. Chairman. Also, the Minister stated that it starts in the family. I understood that when he said it starts in family.

For those of us who are a little bit older, we had parents who were unilingual Inuit. They had their traditional values and principals whose foundation was for compassion, consideration and love.

For those of us who are a little bit younger, we have to live two worlds, two cultures. We know a little bit about Inuit tradition, about the Qallunaat culture. Can you imagine what our younger generation has to go through, what they have to face today because they have to live two worlds?

They are bilingual; they have two cultures that are always in a tug of war with either culture. We have to start supporting them in either culture. We have to be able to support them because it's amazing that they are able to adapt to such an environment. They are able to live in a bilingual environment.

I can eat traditional foods like igunaq, and I can eat apples as well, like fruits, but the younger generation has different things today.

I think that we should empower our children, or help our children to build up their self esteem. How can we help our young people to build their self esteem? I keep getting back to that 100 people that the Minister referred to who have committed suicide since the creation of Nunavut.

What kinds of ideas or suggestion can we come up with? Can we provide additional funding for Counsellors? Are we going to have volunteers only at all times in the communities when they help people in suicide?

I am not blaming the Government. As MLAs, we are here to try to help our Government to come up with ideas where we can help our young people. We already know that there is a problem. Even if we are not affected directly by suicide, we have been affected. We have helped families who had people commit suicide in their families.

I wanted to bring something up where we were told to be frank and open about the discussion that we are talking about right now, and that we should not hide anything. We should point blank talk about it.

There was a suicide by a non-native person who was older. The coroner stated the reason why they committed suicide. We have to start doing the same thing about inquiries about suicide within Nunavut.

Why is it when a suicide that happens in Correctional Centres, there is an inquiry that goes on? Why do we not do that for the other suicides that happen in the homes? Perhaps we should try to find out what the background was of that person who committed suicide? What kind of education?

That person who committed suicide at the Correctional Centre, they did an inquiry about the people who worked at the time and what kind of crime that they did. Everything was looked into. They got the necessary information that they needed, because they were incarcerated.

I am not blaming anyone at all; because of that person was non-native, who had an opportunity to have an inquiry done on them. I am not blaming because they are non-native, but maybe we should start doing the same thing for Inuit suicides. I will have further questions to ask on this issue. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Please be open and talk about anything that you want to say, be frank even if it is hurtful. We need talk about suicide whether they are non-native or not; suicide affects everyone.

We as individuals make choices of our own. So we need to start expressing ourselves whether it might be hurtful to someone else. We cannot do anything about someone who has completed suicide. As soon as they have passed away, we cannot do anything about it, although we have so much compassion and empathy for the parents.

We have to start talking about this issue at this time. Mr. Havioyak will make general comments.

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): This is a very touchy issue, as we all know. How can we rectify the problem? I don't know but as my colleagues were stating earlier, what they have come across, I would like to say that on this subject, as I stated yesterday during my Members' Statements, there are people who are in the community who are there to help in the community.

They're the people who have regular contact with the young people, who interact with the young people. When they interact with the young people, they help to start finding out the problems that are hidden inside a young person.

The people who are the help line, who are volunteers, are there for a reason. They chose to stay in the community to help and work with the young people. That was my Members' Statement. I am still 100 percent behind that.

I used the police officers as an example. We also have agencies like the nurses. We've talked about the problems that we have and how can we solve this. We can't solve this alone. We have to encourage our communities to work together as a community.

You have counsels, DEAs, you have parents, young people who are active and don't forget our elders. We've come to a conclusion at times and wonder why a person has committed suicide. We wonder, is it because they have a problem dealing with something in their personal life?

You may think that you've seen that particular person the day before and he seemed okay. But deep down inside, he's been hurting for a while. There are some signs of a person who is in depression or in need of help but still he is able to carry on with that hurt.

I will use this as an example. Just the other day in Kugluktuk, as I was in my constituency office, I received an email from a young person. This young person wrote to me through the internet saying, I have a problem today. How can I deal with this? Perhaps tomorrow I will not be here. He does not have any parents and this young person was asking for help, and here I was wondering, am I the only person here to deal with this? So I replied back, we all have problems one time or another but we have to deal with our problems.

Perhaps today is not a good day for you but you have to be encouraged to carry on tomorrow or on another day we might find a solution to your problem. I continued responding to him, if your grandfather was here today he would advise you and say that I have lived a long life. I lived a long life to help others and therefore I would like you to live a long life too, to help yourself, to help your people.

That's the way I responded and I further said that we all have problems to deal with, when you deal with a problem it can't be solved overnight sometimes, but you can't stop there.

Having said that each community whether it's a big community or a small community, we have agencies, we have individuals that have to get together to help one another to tackle this problem.

Prior to coming in for the session I had met with the elders and there was a discussion around the table about ignoring problems like this. The elders have said that if we continue to ignore the problem we're losing time where we should have helped this person and we didn't help him.

The person who should have been helped is gone the next day. We as the Nunavut Government, we need to be working together to find solutions. As Minister Picco had stated we want to tackle this problem but we can't do it alone, we have to work together.

But as we know, we try to overcome some problems in a hurry and it gets worse. How can we tackle this problem?

As you stated earlier Minister, we have this National Suicide Prevention Conference here in Iqaluit. This is a good start for suicide prevention strategies.

We have youth committees in the communities who try very hard to stand on their own. We have elders committees who struggle on their own and wonder why they're left alone to tackle problems.

We need to put both groups together to help one another. We can't leave one group alone and have them trying to tackle this alone. We have always been advised that when we look at a problem and see a problem, we can't ignore that.

I will comment a little bit further on that later. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Haviyok. Just to let the Members understand that with anybody, whether they're elders or young people, they commit suicide at any age. Everybody grieves. Young people are not the only ones who commit suicide. Adults also commit suicide.

All of our minds can be affected one way or another, so let's not forget that while we're talking about suicide. It can be anyone who can have their minds affected by something that can perhaps be a problem for them. Now it's time for Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The report that was provided to us in March 2002, talked about the strategy and I will briefly talk about it later on. But at this time I would like to contemplate back on our parents' experiences.

Our parents have been affected greatly by the government's policies. It also talks about in this paper. Inuit are being affected by people taking away their culture. For instance, at the beginning, when they went to school in Chesterfield Inlet and Yellowknife and other residential schools, their languages were affected.

It even states here that in Herman Report on page 51, because they no longer can relate to their parents because they went to residential schools. This affected the parents as well because they have not raised their children because they went to a residential school, especially for those male individuals who went to residential schools. People have also been affected by the RCMP eliminating the dog teams of Inuit.

I have heard some people saying other things that have affected them. Also, about the dogs that are out on the loose get shot, and that's also affected the people out there, that affected our parents.

Also, by the religious people, the Inuit people's beliefs were changed by those religious people who came to the communities. Some of them wanted to follow the religious beliefs of the people who came into their community to preach to them and they felt that they had to believe in what they were told.

When we were younger, the Government assimilated the people into the communities, even though they were living in individual camps. The reasoning behind that by the Government was that the children could receive an education, and that they can have better healthcare.

Those are the types of things that happened, maybe because the Government employees did not want to go to individual camps because they maybe thought it was too cold, maybe that is why they put them into communities, such as Arctic Bay, Clyde River, and other communities that are settlements and hamlets today.

There is Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay that were never settled into before because they were relocated from Northern Quebec. That was not part of the Inuit way. Our parents have been ruled by the Government so much that they figured that the Qallunaaq is automatically a leader at that time, whether it be a preacher, or RCMP, as long as they were non-native, they were identified as leaders by our parents.

There were students sent to Aklavik, Inuvik, and Yellowknife, and Chesterfield Inlet to boarding schools. When they came back home, because they were not raised by their parents, the parents did not really know how to go about looking after their grown children that became teenagers.

And also with the children who keep losing their teeth because they were bottle fed. What I am trying to say is the topic that we are discussing at this time, it just seems like we do not give them any social skills anymore. We do not teach them about death, like we were taught. We used to teach our children to fear death. We had to teach them survival skills.

We have to remember to keep our lives by watching over each other and watching ourselves to make sure that we do not get into an accidental where we can die.

Mr. Chairman, I think that we have to look for ways to make sure to keep our children alive, to prevent them from committing suicide. We are not teaching them any survival skills anymore. They seem to be growing up on their own. We are not saying enough to the children to make them fear death.

There are different reasons such as losing their culture, addiction to alcohol and other drugs, and not being a close knit family, and losing your parental skills. Those are the different types of reasons for suicide nowadays.

Those are the other things that we should think about. We cannot just think about what is in this mental health strategy. We also have to think about other things. This way we can recognise or realize that the people who commit suicide also have different reasons for committing suicide.

There are various reasons. It does not matter that there are different reasons that they have out there. We have to let them realize that tomorrow is going to be a new day. I think we should start expanding the mental horizon of our children as parents, without imagining them committing suicide, so that we can prepare them for their future and teach them about life's cycles, and to have better expectations, that there will be good things coming in their future. We should start pointing out to them personal perspectives like that, that there will always be a tomorrow.

When our children have expectations of the future, for me it was seeing my father making preparations the night before that made me wish the tomorrow would arrive right away so that we could get on the road. These days, our youth are really soft and when they are given a retort, it affects them personally and they lose all perspective other than the problem that is affecting them.

So, Mr. Chairman, at this time I have lost my sleigh of thought so I will be asking some questions later, but that is it for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. When you saw your time expiring, your mind went blank and lost your thoughts. I believe that some people commit suicide because their mental perspective gets lost and they see no other way out. I hope that is not the case. Mr. Anawak.

Hon. Jack Anawak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. July 4, 1977 and December 18, 1977, are the two days that I will never forget. When I was growing up, we grew up when there was no structured housing in the communities, at least our generation. The only people that had housing were the Bay boys, the RCMP and the Catholic priests.

When I was growing up to the age of 27 years in 1977, in the community of Repulse Bay, I never even heard about suicide. I think it was in the 1970s, there used to be suicide but I do not remember if there had been any suicide, which occurred within Repulse Bay itself.

But, July 4, 1977 and December 18, 1977 were the days that I will never forget because it was very shocking to me because I had never heard about healthy people committing suicide even though I heard about it before that.

At that time, when the elders did not feel that they were useful anymore, they seemed to lose hope and just let things happen to them. It was unheard of to hear about suicide in the younger generations. Those two days I talked about were very shocking days at that time in Repulse Bay, because it happened to my brothers.

The reason why it shocked me is the endless question of why? Although this occurred in 1977, even though over 26 years have passed, I still feel pain deep inside and still ask myself why? There has been over twenty-six years, why did it happen? Why did that happen to my two younger brothers?

For that reason, I am happy that the Minister is trying to resolve the issue of suicide. As Members, we have been trying to resolve this for a long time. We did this in the Kivalliq region in the previous years; thereafter what we have been doing is manning the Crisis Line to help those people who are in need of assistance. It is very hard to deal with.

I know that people who commit suicide have different reasons, but even though they have various reasons for committing suicide, as a Government, if we work together we could probably lessen it a little bit to help our young people.

Like the Member from Amittuq stated that some of the younger people today are committing suicide. Perhaps if we can involve the younger people and to ask them questions about how they can help if they are involved with our work, because today is a different lifestyle that we led years ago.

Years ago we did not see anything such as computers. We did not see any games that the kids play nowadays. We did not have television. Not very many times we did not hear the radio, because we did not even have radios at that time. I think that when I was nine years old that I finally heard a radio in Chesterfield Inlet.

Those are the types of lifestyle that we led, and this is the lifestyle that the kids are now experiencing, is all different kinds. There is also a lot of work outside of our communities for young people. There is all kinds things out there that can be used by our young people.

There isn't much employment in Nunavut in the communities. There is a lot of unemployment out there. Even when I go to Rankin Inlet, or when I go to Repulse Bay, or another community, I often think about the young people. If we were younger today, how would we feel? We are here. We have a job.

Today's youth have no employment whatsoever out there and some of them are not trained to take on jobs. What do they do if they do not go out hunting? There is nothing very much to do in the communities. The only thing that they do is watch TV, and to try to keep themselves occupied by petty theft, and petty crime, and everything else. They do not have any daily expectations that they can look forward to for tomorrow. That is a very hopeless situation that they are in.

We have to try to feel for them, because we realize that they have no employment in the communities. How can we help them to gain employment? And to give them some activities such as there is not very many Arenas over there, and there is not very many young people who occupy themselves by recreational activities and stuff. This way we have to try to help them to make sure that they have activities that they can have in the communities.

We have to try to find something for them to do to make them more confident about themselves, such as bowling perhaps. We were in Greenland, there is a bowling alley over there and many young people go over there to bowl.

Those types of things are what we have to try to provide for our young people in the communities and to involve our elders. We are taking over the traditional elder's role right now whether you are a Member of a committee or whatever.

It is just like we are taking over role of our elders because we do not have anything for them to do. We have to try to make sure that we provide them with something. How can we best utilize their skills, experience and ability to help? Sometimes people talk about those of us who went to school in Chesterfield Inlet, to the residential school. We have been hurt in many different ways, such as sexual assault or physical abuse while they were going to residential school.

They continue on with the cycle of violence with their children. How can we help those people that went to residential school? There has to be other things to help those who have been abused and we have to look at stopping the cycle. We have to put the young people and the elders together to try to prevent suicide.

I know there are a lot more youth, especially young males who commit suicide, but we have to try to help prevent them from completing suicide. In development of things over time, we are taking over everybody's traditional role and we are leaving behind a bunch of displaced people and there are people in front of us in a difficult situation.

When I was a young man, we had to go hunting to help out with the food, but today a person can survive at home even though they do not have a job and do not go hunting; they can be provided for by their parents.

We have to look at the situations where their traditional role has been usurped and ensure that we have activities for them, including employment and training so they can be self-reliant and feel self-secure.

I am happy that as Members of the Legislature, that we are finally talking about suicide. But again, I say, let us try to involve the young people and the elders and our support people and remind them about their spot in our communities and this world.

And we require experienced and competent social workers to deal with some of these problems, but we have to debate these issues to have those things happen. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Anawak. I will now give Mr. Nutarak an opportunity.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the issue of suicide, I do not know the reasons why people commit suicide. We have an idea based on the gossip as to the reasons, but we tend to be quiet about these reasons.

That became obvious when we were in caucus this morning when we were talking about the issue of suicide. There are Members of the Legislative Assembly who have lost children through suicide and although it is a concern, we tend to avoid the issue in the fear that our colleagues will become devastated and these types of perceived barriers exist.

So when it comes to that point, we have been quiet about it. It was out of respect to our colleague that we purposefully avoided the issue. It has come to the point where it would be safe to say that it is not so shocking anymore.

On the issue and as Enoki touched on a bit, there are compassionate and strong feelings we all retain in regards to this personal issue, but which we will have to set aside if we are going to discuss the issue of suicide frankly, and to the point.

If I were to hear that one of my children committed suicide, I would be devastated! A layperson would come to inform me and to comfort me, but there would be some issues that we would not talk about.

We do not talk about some personal issues to people, especially to our youth. There is nobody leading the debate and who can give advice on the issue of suicide. Maybe the volunteers at the crisis center give advice on that issue and it is logged on their computers, but not the ordinary Nunavummiut.

If we put out information to the young people as to where they can seek support or advice, especially if we can put a support network out there available to the youth, I feel that we could save lives even without putting all of these recreation facilities in the

communities. I feel that having the proper information for a place of objective and compassionate advice is more important.

We are discussing personal thoughts here, as this issue is a very personal one. Further, our federal government established the Charter of Rights including human rights, so that if an individual is abused, there are certain rights that this individual has, as long as they are in Canada.

Following the constitution and the charter of human rights, I cannot physically abuse my children nor can I verbally abuse them. Because of that, this is one of the challenges we are facing because we cannot deal with our children in the traditional Inuit manner. The elders had their ways of dealing with children, whether it be tough love or something.

I think that we should focus on legislation where it would reinstate the elders' role and their child rearing responsibilities. These days, it seems like we are constantly running into a legislative barrier in our daily lives. If I physically abuse my girlfriend, I would be charged and taken to court.

If I were charged, I would be very scared because of the court charges and especially if it is my first offence. We do not know why suicides have been rampant in our communities. As Rebecca had mentioned earlier, we have to work harder on giving support to our social workers and counsellors at the community level.

As the Minister of Health and Social Services had stated earlier, there was training offered in Clyde River and we should use these trained and skilled people. They are just sitting there without any support and basically on their own. They work really hard to raise money to pay for the airfares, their accommodations and their per/diems to attend meetings.

If we were to give them more authority or support, then they are more than willing to go to other communities to counsel and to help their fellow Nunavummiut. If we empower them, they will be able to go into the schools, to give talks to the students. They will be able to put out the information to the schools and to the young people.

We keep saying that our children are our future and in Pond Inlet, there was one individual who made a proposal so that they could have bible readings at the school.

According to the Inuit who want to have these bible classes, there is a God and Satan that our children have to know about. But, because they are talking about a particular religious denomination, it cannot be practised in the school.

In regards to suicide, there are these same types of barriers that are put in front of us. The traditional knowledge is not really geared towards this issue. We all know that Inuit had shamans. The shaman wanted to find out what happened to a person who committed suicide in the afterlife. They went into a trance to find out and it was stated that the people who commit suicide are in perpetual darkness.

This is something that we do not talk about. As I said before, if I lost a child to suicide, I would be visited by laypeople who are there to comfort and assist me. They do not give you the entire healing process. We cannot be told where that individual goes. If there was an individual who would give the facts to the youth, I think that it would give a lot more support than providing expensive recreational facilities, and other distractions.

We need to be more vocal. We have to be frank. We have to have communication with our children. We also must not infringe on the Human Rights Act. Would it make a difference if we empowered the Inuit Counsellors doing their counselling in the traditional fashion?

The community counsellors, I am not talking about the social service workers, the health nurses, maybe we should put the counsellors under the umbrella of the hamlets. If they could be given more powers, or empowerment, then they should be freer to do what they have to do at the community level.

That is one of the possibilities that we can discuss. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Nutarak. Minister Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am not an expert, but of course, I have been affected by suicide. When I was a young child, I had an older brother, whom I dearly loved, and protected when anyone should do anything to him. In anything that he did, he was my role model. I wanted to do everything that he did. Whatever he did, I did, because I loved him. I was very proud of my older brother.

Of course, he was addicted to what is available now, to drugs. He broke laws and as a result was arrested. Because he did not want to be incarcerated, he took his own life. A piece of my heart died that day.

This is painful and I still have those same feelings. At that time, I was very mad at the RCMP. I was very mad at the Justice system. At that time I lost a good part of my life.

Being a youth, I was following his tracks. I was turned to drugs and alcohol. I was addicted to drugs. I did not care about anything. I rebelled at the RCMP. I was taken to jail. I was incarcerated. As I got older I did think about suicide. I did not feel that my life was worthwhile.

I looked at what would be the least painful way to commit suicide. Hang myself? Overdosing on pills? What if I took the pills and did not die? Would I become mentally ill? I used to think about that.

Today, I am very thankful to my mother, Annie who is not alive anymore, for telling me that I was loved, and that I should not commit suicide because in the future I have a role that I have to play.

She used to tell me that although today might be hard, it will be a better tomorrow, what you are going through today will teach you how to cope in the future. So, today I am very grateful to my mother. I never thought that I would come to this point today because I felt totally worthless.

I did not value my life. But my mother was very insistent and kept telling me that I was loved and they were extremely grateful that I was here, that is what has kept me going to today. So to the young people out there, the young people who think that they are not loved, I want to tell them that you are loved.

It might not seem like that all the time that people love you but your sister, your brother, younger and older siblings, your mother and your father who loves you dearly and have a special place in their hearts for you. Please keep that in mind and I urge the young people to keep that in mind.

Think and focus instead on the future because none of us know what our future is going to hold. There will come a point when you will be in a brighter environment. This is something that I wanted to say.

Yesterday, we were talking about what we can do about suicide, about suicide prevention and what we as a government can do. I will do all I can to help because we sympathize and empathize for the survivors when they are going through that period in their lives.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Premier Okalik. Ms. Thompson.

Hon. Manitok Thompson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and also the Members who have made their general comments.

It gives you a better understanding of the issues and we do not know how or what we can do as a government on the suicide issue. I am very proud of and especially commend the Department of Health and Social Services on their activities on the issue of suicide because they are working extremely hard in this area.

On more than one occasion, during these conferences on suicide prevention, the public walks and travels on suicide prevention, I hear they are not making a dent on the preventive side. I think it would be best if we are quite frank about what we hear out there, especially on the issue of suicide.

There has been more than one person who has told me that we are not making a dent through suicide prevention conferences, through youth walks, through national travels, on this issue of suicide.

People have told me that it is not doing anything to alleviate the devastating number of suicides that are committed and I am sorry to think like that. There are many people who have committed suicide after these walks or conferences, so we need to find a better approach.

My uncle, Robert Tatty, my mother's brother who is an elder in Rankin Inlet, I met up with him recently. He stated that he is starting to think about the issue since he has been going out on the land, and being with young people to tell them that suicide is not okay.

He says that he has not been sparing in his advice about the way life gives you challenges, instead he said that taking the tough love stance is more effective than the youth walks and the suicide prevention conferences. It is more effective if you go out, one on one with the youth on the land, take a tough love stance and tell them the truth. If you are no longer patronizing them and tell them the truth, especially the part in the bible about not murdering people.

The same elder told me that he is thinking of going to the schools to talk about suicide. I told him that I would talk to the school and set up an appointment when he can go visit the school. He said that he does not have to get paid for doing this service. I talked to the school administration and I was told that they have an open door policy with the elders. They can come into the school at any time.

We all know that the Inuit will not go to those types of institutions uninvited, because that is not our tradition of barging into a place uninvited. They have to get a phone call saying at two o'clock, you are going over there and that way they feel that they are invited.

There is the difference between the Qallunaaq culture, and the Inuk culture. A lot of times it is due to this miscommunication that nothing happens. So tell them at what time and what date that they can go in. That is what I wanted to say and the parents are going through extremely hard times in their lives.

Some of them have very good parental skills, and they have a good home environment, so it seems. The parents are working extremely hard and some of them are at their wits end. They have come to this feeling of hopelessness, because they have no support system out there.

No one is going to call them just to check to see if they are okay. They have to approach these clinics or these counsellors, and then they are emancipated by all of these bogus words without resolving the initial problem.

I think our young people are going through a crisis at this time. They have come to the point of hopelessness that there is nothing for them to do. They are in this state because they have this feeling of hopelessness and of committing suicide. I do not know what the reason is myself. That is why they feel so useless, so uneventful and purposeless.

In the school environment, the children are taught to read, to do mathematics, to do geography, social studies, and there is nothing in there about parenting or life skills. When they go home, they turn on the TV. Their parents do not have the time because they are also overwhelmed by responsibilities.

In the schools, at least they have things to do. There are many dropouts who have absolutely nothing to do. Here the parents cannot find the jobs for those children. The children will not take the initiative to go out there and look for a job. They do not say that they want a job. There are many young people just in their rooms watching TV, playing their Playstation and they do that all night. That is the way we now live our lives, constantly interrupted at every turn.

It is very hard on the parents. It is extremely hard on the parents. You have to hold the child and say here is a job. You have to hold their hands in order to give them a little bit of a push.

What about the unilingual Inuit? They must be in a harder situation than we are; they have no job or other options available to us. I wonder what else we can do or say to alleviate this issue.

There is Jesus and there is God, and it is something that I am not ashamed to say. Many times we have come to the point of hopelessness. We go to Church and the answer comes and then again on the other side there is Satan. There is a lot of danger that we do not worry about. We do not hear about death and it is a very scary thing.

Again the Churches are not being aggressive enough in their teachings. As a parent today, it's extremely hard if we're going that crisis. Look at our children who are going through something heavier.

This will pass. We have to keep going forward. Those are very good words, what Arvaluk said. Why have we lost this looking at hope, not giving up, having a goal? There's unemployment. There are people who drop out of school even though they're advised by their parents not to.

They have no support from the government. You can only come here and get a job. They're not going to go to your houses. There are some people who are just drug addicts or just smoking everyday. They just smoke to make themselves feel better.

I think we have to teach religion in the schools. That has been taken out because we have to be the same as everybody else. Those are my comments. I want to hear from the other Members.

I think you have recommendations or plans of action. We the parents are hopeless now and if we're in that state, our children must be going through something harder. If we don't make changes, the government won't do anything, and have employees who are willing and have home visits and so on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Thompson. At this time we'll have Mr. Kattuk.

Hon. Peter Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The comments from our colleagues are very interesting comments and they're very true. We were told earlier that we can speak out on anything that we'd like, just to be frank and straight forward.

I have something to say that is brief. And I'd like to talk about suicide as well. I am one of the oldest Members of the Legislative Assembly in the house and my colleague, Anawak mentioned earlier, that those of us who were born out on the land, before they were amalgamated into communities, we knew the traditional way of life having said this we have literally lived on two worlds.

I am happy to see that I know where I am today. I know where I stand and what I've accomplished to date. And I am proud of that because I was fortunate enough to be given a foundation that is solid because I was able to hunt and travel by dog team with my father.

I'll never forget that and one of the reasons might be that I am one of the eldest of my father's children and I was given the responsibility of taking on a role as one of the older children.

It was a role where I had to help my family to support the rest of my siblings. I was given the responsibility of going out hunting for any bird game and also to go out on dog team to hunt for food.

I was able to, on my own, harness my dog team and go out on the land to hunt. I had to learn those life skills from my father in order to survive, for our family.

But as soon as the Government came to the North, my life totally changed and it was because they said that it was mandatory that we go to school. It was like we were taken from our parents and it was like being put into an institution where you are incarcerated.

And no wonder, a lot of the young people or young adults are going through such a hard time because we feel worthlessness and full of hopelessness. As Jobie stated earlier when you are suicidal, if you commit it, then you would go to this dark place. I too have heard of this place, that it is so opaque that it is a very dark place.

Although it may hurt people when we talk about it, but the things we heard this morning about speaking from our hearts is true. I have also heard about this place where you end up if you have committed suicide. All this is on top of the pressures that our young people have to go through within the schools or the education system is tremendous.

They have such stress on what they have to learn and we need to start advising our young people that if you commit suicide, you are going to this certain place where there is

darkness. And we have to start teaching them that suicide or taking one's life is not the way and it is against the laws of nature.

And when we are talking about suicide prevention within the Government system, I sometimes wonder how and what I can do to help prevent suicide. Or what can we do to make it proactive that in a way that it influences young people to be positive about life and themselves.

And when we start talking about suicide out in the open, we seem to be passing on the responsibility to somebody else other than the Government. And we seem to pass this responsibility on to people who are in the assistance profession.

And when we talk about our Suicide Prevention in the House, although it is a program under the umbrella of the Government we give these programs to the existing councils or groups within the communities and we pass the buck along.

We have to make sure that we talk about suicide in the open and like Minister Thompson said that there are a lot of different things that cause suicide and we have so much research and programs to combat it, but the suicide is not decreasing; it is increasing.

And when we say that we were going to talk about suicide, I was so happy. At least we are trying to talk about it in the open and here we are talking about it. This is a start and we are now able to talk about it openly as a Government and I encourage you as my colleagues to try and find ways we can prevent suicide and help our young people to live proactive lives and give them stronger self-esteem.

It was mentioned earlier, there is God, there is Jesus, and there is Satan. I believe that myself. But on the other hand, when it's almost Christmas time, in the month of December, there's such a force, an evil force that comes into our communities or into our lives, that Satan, that evil force, that energy, that goes into these young people's lives or anybody's lives and turns everything upside down.

That seems to happen especially during the month of December when it's Christmas time, during the celebration of the birth of Christ. Evil Satan doesn't want us to be happy. There are volunteers within the communities who help other people who are care givers because they have committed themselves to helping others.

I know of a person just recently during Christmas, who was going through a hard time just before Christmas. That person came to our place to have supper with us during the month of December and that care giver stated that this is the heaviest month for young people who want to commit suicide and this is the busiest time of the month for me to try and help young people.

Although there are not too many suicides that have happened within my constituency, and I am thankful for that, but I think that we should be exposing our compassion and

help each other within our community because it's quite remote from here and also it's a small community.

We've been able to work together to have compassion and help others. We need to have more compassionate and love towards one another because we said that if you have any problems or concerns, you can come to me or go to someone you feel comfortable talking with.

That's what we announce over the radio. We even announce over the radio a number of times during the year that if anyone is going through a hard time, that there are people in the community who you can turn to if you're going through a crisis situation.

I think my time is up. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (Mr. Irqittuq) (interpretation): Thank you. We still have some time. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. All the things that I am hearing are making me want to cry. I believe in Jesus and I believe in Satan.

I've gone through everything that I am supposed to follow. I used things that I am not supposed to use and then on the other hand I can resist temptation. The majority of the time I resist temptation and follow Jesus in the path that I was given. But I cannot be perfect all time.

I am not bad all the time either. I come into situations where sometimes, I go through bad situations and then I go through good situations. We need to make rooms within the education systems as a government, to start helping our children with life and coping skills because as parents, we have taken away the responsibility that we have as parents in teaching our children about life skills.

And when our children come home from school, what they have learned and what we are supposed to teach them at home, it is different and we do not always have the time to tend to our children.

Even right now as MLA's, we have left our families at home, left our children at home to attend this Legislative Assembly. And we leave them in the care of others and sometimes their grandparents will come and see them now and then, but not everyday.

Suicide is something that has always been there, from a long time ago. Even our Shamans, who had tried to figure out through spiritual travel, went to see where people who committed suicide went to.

The Shamans traveled to the other side, to the supernatural world and saw those people who had committed suicide were hanging, their tongues hanging and other forms of suicide.

The person who had committed suicide is in the hands of Satan and they are in the Lake of Fire, eternally in pain because if we do commit suicide, that is where we go.

There are people who go who are judged within the Court System; they are not the only ones that are going to be judged. They are only judged in this world. When we come to the Judgement Day, everyone will go through Judgement Day.

And if I am in the Book of Life, I will be able to enter Heaven, I will be so happy, but if God said, you did not listen to me, you will be thrown into the Lake of Fire and we have no choice but to go there.

Although we are judged through the Justice System, through the Courts, if we have committed a crime, I do not think that is nothing compared to what we expect in the afterlife if we were thrown into the Lake of Fire because that is what I was taught from my elders and I firmly believe that.

I have experienced this a little bit myself because I have had to fight with a spirit, physically fighting a spirit who was trying to kill me, encouraging me to commit suicide, doing things to me to try and kill myself.

There are so many things that we encounter that might want us to commit suicide because there are spirits out there; there are demons who will physically fight you. They're physical, they look like the real person that committed suicide and they look like a person but they are cold to touch and cold all around them.

James mentioned earlier that as Inuit, there were many things that were imposed upon us, such as killing off our dogs and amalgamation into the communities, taken from the home to attend residential schools.

And also, policies imposed that changed the way we live in the home. And I grew up with my father for about two years, when I was two years of age, I started going out hunting with my father.

And what I learned from my father in a practical sense, I use today for my life skills.

One time, when my father and I were out hunting and we got really cold and we got stuck out on the land. I was so scared that I didn't want to die. So, I started running towards our camp and I ran all day until I reached it to keep warm. That's the kind of thing that we need to encourage our young people to do is teach them how to have survival instincts.

Because of the education system, because of all the things that have been imposed upon us, we have no choice but to let our children attend school. The most valuable thing that seems to run our lives today is money.

We can't run anything without money. We can't purchase anything without money. We can't start programs without money. Monetary value is more important than human value. Although it may change in the future, but monetary value is such that we need to pay for every little thing material things that we have today.

I am sure that has a detrimental effect on our lives. When those people who are victims of suicide, or have had loved ones who have committed suicide, we'll always feel for those people who are going through the situation at the present time, where they have committed suicide.

Another thing that I would like to mention is that if there was no communication system at the time, when there was no radio or anything like that, we were told that we have to try and communicate somehow through spiritual means.

Nowadays, we have the media. It seems as though the media, like CBC, if they touch upon a subject, they go after that one certain story so much that it's exaggerated to a point where that individual is feeling like they're being attacked.

If there's a certain subject through the media, like CBC, they probably will think of different stories on one subject for a whole year. Also, as Inuit, we tend to make fun of other people. And we tend to make other people look bad by looking down on them.

That has a very big effect on different people as well. Mr. Chairman, I have no more time. That's all I have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Mr. Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I believe I am probably the last Member who hasn't had an opportunity to speak. I would ask for the indulgence of my colleagues to allow me to finish my opening comments before we report progress.

Chairperson (interpretation): Agreed? Go ahead Mr. Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, it's obvious from some of the emotional discussions that have taken place from our colleagues here today, this afternoon that this issue has impacted all of us in one way or another, whether directly, indirectly.

The case remains that it is an issue that is prevalent in our constituencies and in Nunavut. I don't think anybody has the easy rationale for the reasons. I think that probably bridging the generational gap between a traditional lifestyle into a more modern lifestyle. I get the view if somebody who originated from the south, as far as bringing a new system to the north, is one of the reasons.

It certainly is a factor, I think. The exposure to media that we bring in from the south that has not happened before. I think there have been discussions on that in the past. Certainly the issue about the young population that we have.

I know that it does impact women and men. It does impact older people all through the age groups but predominantly, like Minister Picco stated, it is young males where the incidents happen unfortunately.

So I think you have to look at why. You have to try to find the reasons, determine the reasons, before you can find the some solutions. There are issues about young parents, you know, whether they are able to cope with more permanent relationships, having young families.

The social conditions that many of our constituents are under, as far as the issue of having affordable housing, having employment opportunities or income generating opportunities to support yourself and your immediate family members.

Peer pressure, the people you hang out with and the possibilities of using alcohol and drugs. The issue about parental pressure even, what do your parents expect of you as a young person growing up and becoming a part of your community and society as a whole.

The issue of abuse, whether or not the individual was abused as a child or as a young man or young woman, whatever the case may be, those are all factors that come into play at one point or another that are determinates, I think of suicidal behaviour.

So, I think there is a whole wide spectrum there. It is how do you address that issue that everyone is looking for the solutions. I think we have to make sure, obviously there are issues around having the possibility of hope for our people, hope for a happy, productive life, of being able to look forward to a future of being able to provide for themselves and their families.

Those are all factors as well. I think what we have to do, and the mental health strategy, is certainly a good start, we have to look at hearing first hand from youth primarily on what they see as the problems, from elders who have been around for a long time, from all the front line worker who deal with our people on a daily basis.

Whether it is the staff at the health centre, the police, the mental health workers, the alcohol and drug workers, the community health representatives, the shelter workers, whoever is out there to try to bring some information in?

The more information we have, the better to deal with the issue. As a government, it's obviously our responsibility to try and facilitate that, to bring forward the resources necessary, to develop that strategy and to implement a strategy.

But more importantly, once that is in place, to monitor it and to see if it is working. And if it is not, to refine it because I think we all want to try and tackle this issue but nobody really knows the perfect solution.

I think it is valuable that we are here talking about that. I, like all of us here, will do the best I can to try and make sure that we put mechanisms in place to try and deal with this matter.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Ng. For all the Members, who have voiced their concerns and there is also one more Member who needs to make his comments, Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to start off by reading some statistics. According to statistics, there were 26,745 people living in Nunavut in 2001. According to the Chief Coroner, there were 29 suicides in 2001.

If we look at it across Canada, there are roughly 30 million people. In 1998, about 3,700 people across Canada committed suicide. If the rest of the country experienced the same rate of suicide that we have in Nunavut, that would be over 32,000 suicides across the country.

I think this is an issue that is very serious and that we have to find a way to try and deal with it. As I mentioned to some of my colleagues this morning, it is not an easy topic for some people to talk about.

There are Members in this room, myself included, who have been affected very personally and very closely. You know, I heard hope mentioned earlier; I think that is what a lot of it is. People lose hope for whatever reason.

I think that some of the things are the factors that we hear about like the alcohol abuse, substance abuse, physical, mental or emotional abuse and people say that was the problem. I do not believe that those things themselves are the problems. Those are the result of another problem that lead to that problem.

I think that there are a lot of the social issues that we have to deal with as a Government like housing, adequate housing, good quality education and employment opportunities for our young people.

That is what is going to be more effective in the long-term in dealing with the rates like we see today. People have something to look forward to. I think many people do not like to talk about it, but any chance I get when I talk to young people is to tell them to never be afraid to talk to somebody.

If something is bothering you, do not be scared to talk to someone about it, because if you keep it to yourself in your own little world, nothing can be worse than that. Probably ten times out of ten, when someone has talked to another person about it and got it off their chest, they feel like things are not that bad and it is not going to stay like that, things will get better.

I think some of the work that the Department of Health and Social Services has done is great. I think it needs to be more of a collaborative effort on behalf of the Federal Government.

You know those other issues that have to be dealt with, in housing and education, and justice. You know, those types of things, by doing it from the Health and Social Services point of view, it is almost like putting a bandage on for nothing. You are not addressing your real problems.

If you want to fix it, let us fix it right and I think that we need a Government-wide approach or strategy to deal with the issues around suicide.

It is not just this factor or that factor; I think that it is a number of things. And like Minister Ng stated, you cannot put your finger on any one thing. I believe that it is hopelessness that causes this.

The life we lead today is not the same life that was lead by our people yesterday, and what with the technology changing so fast, that has a huge impact on our people and our culture and our way of life.

Sometimes things have changed so fast in one generation and from one generation to the next, and then people start thinking who am I? what am I? That leads to the hopelessness that's out there. People have questions and doubt in themselves.

I think that these types of issues, what we're going through here in Nunavut, it's new to us. It's not new to other people in other places. It happens to other people in other places in the world, in the country.

Look at the aboriginal peoples in southern Canada, and in North America. I am sure you could look at the same thing in other countries with aboriginal Peoples. They've all gone through this before. It's the same thing.

I think that from that, we should be able to look at some of the issues that they faced in those circumstances and how they dealt with them and maybe we can use some of the information to help us.

I might have some questions tomorrow. I don't want to go on too long. But like I said, it's not just a Health and Social Services issue; it's got to be a government wide, to come up with some kind of a strategy to deal with the whole picture and not just putting band aids on things. That's it for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. I have no more names or no more hands up. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk: We would like to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. This motion is not debatable. There's a motion to report progress and it's not debatable.

All in favour of the motion? Carried.

Thank you, Minister. Minister Picco, thank you very much. At the beginning of your presentation, it was very interesting to hear your comments and we'll get back to you tomorrow.

I would like to express my appreciation to you and your officials at this time. We'll see you again tomorrow. Thank you.

We can ask the Deputy Speaker to come into the chambers. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Returning to Orders of the Day. Item 20. Report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Item 20: Report of Committee of the Whole

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Mr. Speaker, your Committee has been considering Minister Statement 095-1 (6) and would like to report that they are still considering it along with Tabled Document #30-1 (6). Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): There is a Motion. Is there a seconder? Mr. Nutarak. The Motion is in order. All those in favour. All opposed. The Motion is carried. Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. Item 22. Orders of the Day. Mr. Quirke.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Orders of the Day for Thursday, March 6th, 2003:

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. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabled Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 17 – 1(6)
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 23 and Bill 24
 - Minister's Statement 95 - 1 (6)
 - Tabled Document 30 - 1 (6)
20. Report of Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Just before we adjourn, I would like to make a comment about the discussions that the Members carried out today about suicide prevention. We will not give up on this discussion that we had today and we will continue to discuss it. And our comments are going to be heard by the people out there and we will have a solid foundation to help each other and to work together to resolve suicide.

This house stands adjourned until March the 6th 2003 at 1:30.

Sergeant-at-Arms

>>*House adjourned at 18.14 p.m.*

