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

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Tuesday March 11, 2003

Members Present:

Mr. James Arvaluk, Mr. Donald Havioyak, Mr. David Iqaqrialu, Mr. Enoki Irgittuq, Honourable Peter Kattuk, Honourable Peter Kilabuk, Mr. Jobie Nutarak, Honourable Kelvin Ng, Mr. Glenn McLean, Honourable Kevin O'Brien, Honourable Paul Okalik, Honourable Ed Picco, Mr. Puqiqnak, Honourable Manito Thompson, Mr. Hunter Tootoo, Ms. Rebekah Williams.

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Mr. O'Brien): I would like to call on Mr. Puqiqnak to say the opening prayer.

>>Prayer

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Puqiqnak. Going onto Item 2. Budget Address. Mr. Ng.

Budget Address

Budget Address

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Mr. Speaker, Honourable Colleagues and Nunavummiut. As we enter 2003-2004, the final year of our current mandate, it is important to acknowledge the significant contribution by each Member of this Legislative Assembly, who together with the dedicated efforts of our public service, have made the Government of Nunavut a working reality.

The task of establishing a new, fully functioning government is a significant achievement, Mr. Speaker, which is unprecedented in Canada's recent history. We have accomplished this while respecting the traditional Inuit values upon which Nunavut was created by our founding Fathers. Through prudent decision-making, we have successfully set a course for the future development of the territory and built a strong foundation for the next Legislative Assembly to continue our commitment to meet the best interests of Nunavummiut.

Yet there have been considerable challenges along the way. Not the least of which is the burgeoning need for social and economic infrastructure to support Nunavut's widely dispersed, youthful and growing population.

Under the current mandate, the Government of Nunavut has pursued several key initiatives to ensure strong fiscal management across government operations in order to efficiently and effectively meet these requirements.

Mr. Speaker, we have pursued strategic investments in social and economic infrastructure and fostered key partnerships with the Government of Canada, our provincial and

territorial counterparts, and the Inuit birthright organizations. We have strengthened internal capacity through training and development programs. I wish to highlight some of the key initiatives we have undertaken during our mandate.

We have pursued strategic initiatives in education, which includes significant investment in school facilities and curriculum development.

We have invested in new housing stock and actively sought partnership arrangements to adequately house our growing population.

We have made strategic investments in health care, which will see a state-of-the-art hospital in Nunavut's capital, and two new health centres in Cambridge Bay and Rankin Inlet.

We have developed partnerships with the two other territories to broaden awareness of the unique challenges of the North, while negotiating with the federal government on such matters as the Formula Financing Arrangement and the Health Accord.

We have undertaken a government-wide program review to improve the delivery of programs and services.

We have placed major focus upon the integration of traditional Inuit culture, language and values into government operations.

We have developed programs in nursing and law in Nunavut, as well as two internship programs to support beneficiary development and employment, in support of our Inuit Employment Plan.

We have achieved decentralization objectives to make government more accessible and responsive to our people, and provide employment and economic opportunities across the territory.

We have initiated discussions with the Government of Canada with the aim of securing control over the management of our natural resources, and an economic development agreement to enhance our economy and revenue base.

All of these initiatives are critical towards ensuring a sound social and economic foundation for Nunavut's future.

Mr. Speaker, today, I have the privilege of presenting our fifth budget, the final one for the term of the First Legislative Assembly. It builds on the theme of sound financial management and responsible decision-making, evident in our first four years of operation. While we all can be proud of the achievements of Nunavut to-date, we must continue to acknowledge the many challenges that lie ahead as we strive to meet the needs and aspirations of Nunavummiut across our young and vast territory.

Addressing Our Fiscal Circumstance

The Government of Nunavut continues to face urgent fiscal pressures to enhance much-needed social and economic infrastructure in addition to meeting ongoing program requirements.

Through prudent use of accumulated surpluses from our initial years, we have strived to make wise investments and develop a strong foundation for our future. However, this level of growth in expenditures is not sustainable without securing additional revenue sources.

Yet, control of Nunavut's natural resource base still lies with the Government of Canada and our economy is largely undeveloped, so we must rely on that government for most of our revenues. If we are to provide Nunavummiut with a level of services enjoyed by other Canadians, we must, Mr. Speaker, we must have increased funding from the federal government.

We will continue to seek changes in the level of federal support through:

- renegotiating the Formula Financing Arrangement to secure increased funding;
- aligning with territorial counterparts to bring further awareness of our unique challenges in the North;
- encouraging discussions to secure control over the development and management of our natural resources;
- working with other stakeholders to obtain federal commitment to an economic development agreement for the territory; and
- gaining further capital investment dollars through accessing federal initiatives.

The Government of Nunavut, through Premier Okalik, Members of Cabinet and with the strong support of Regular Members of this Legislative Assembly, have strongly made the case that the development of the Nunavut economy depends in large part on increased public investment.

The Nunavut Fiscal Review, an undertaking that was supported by both the previous and current federal Ministers of Finance, has provided further opportunity to present our long-term fiscal situation and challenges to the federal government. We will be continuing this dialogue.

Mr. Speaker, all provinces and territories receive transfers from the Government of Canada. For the three territories, the most significant of these federal transfers is the Formula Financing Arrangement.

For the 2003-2004 fiscal year, we are projecting \$729.6 million in federal transfers. More than 90 percent of this total amount will be provided through the Formula Financing Arrangement.

The annual amount that Nunavut receives through the Formula Financing Arrangement is not a fixed amount. Rather, it responds to changes in the annual growth or reduction of provincial government expenditures and the national economy. In addition, the annual amount is influenced by the amount of Nunavut's tax revenue and annual change in our population relative to Canada's population.

At the recent meeting between Prime Minister Chrétien and the territorial premiers, the Prime Minister indicated that the formula should be reviewed to ensure it meets the fiscal challenges faced by our governments.

We are very optimistic, Mr. Speaker, that this will result in real improvement in our fiscal position.

The level of financial support that the provinces and territories receive from the federal government has been the subject of intense discussion for the past several months.

Both the Kirby Senate Report and the Romanow Royal Commission Report recommended increased federal participation in health care funding across the country. Premier Okalik and his provincial and territorial colleagues met in early February to discuss health care renewal. Prime Minister Chrétien offered a national \$12 billion package over three years that would be allocated on a per capita basis.

Mr. Speaker, we know that per capita allocations for federal funding do not work for the North. The 2003 Health Accord will provide at least \$9 million to Nunavut over the next three years. This level of funding represents an average of about \$3 million a year, or about one week of health care costs in Nunavut. The territorial Premiers did not endorse the Accord. Fortunately, there is now growing federal recognition that the use of a per capita formula to calculate territorial shares is not appropriate.

Nunavut generates less than 10 percent of its revenue through taxes, fees, licenses and a variety of other own-source revenues. However as we all recognize, Mr. Speaker, it is our land that holds tremendous potential as a source of additional revenue in the future.

Since 1999 the mining industry has invested more than \$215 million in exploring for minerals in Nunavut. In the next five years some projects are expected to be developed into commercial operations. These include the Jericho diamonds project and the Miramar Hope Bay gold project in the Kitikmeot, and the Meadowbank and Meliadine gold projects in the Kivalliq, as well as exploration activities for diamonds in the Melville Peninsula in the Baffin Region.

Our northern fisheries also hold much promise. Over the past couple of years our share of our adjacent offshore turbot resource has increased from 27 percent to approximately 58 percent today. In that same time period our share of our adjacent shrimp resource has increased from approximately 17 to 25 percent. Our ultimate goal is to reach allocations comparable to other adjacent jurisdictions, which is in the range of 80 to 95 percent.

Discussions are continuing with the federal government on an ongoing basis and it is anticipated that these numbers will increase substantially in 2003.

Mr. Speaker, if Nunavut is to truly benefit from mining and other natural resource developments, we must have greater control over our resources. Over the past four years, we have worked hard to advance discussions with the federal government regarding the devolution of authority for land and resource management.

This issue is extremely important to Nunavut. The territory contains over one-fifth of the landmass of Canada, and tremendous potential exists in harnessing the wealth of the natural resources that are contained within our borders.

We will continue to pursue discussions with the federal government, stressing that the power to levy and collect royalties from our natural resources represents one of the key cornerstones in establishing a sound foundation for the future economy of Nunavut.

Also, we are committed to working with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and other partners to ensure we have the capacity to effectively manage our natural resources once assumed through the devolution process.

Working jointly with other stakeholders, we plan to continue efforts to secure an economic development agreement with the federal government. Despite repeated efforts to get strategic economic investment for Nunavut, the North is still the only remaining region of Canada without an economic development agreement with the Government of Canada.

This gap has seriously impacted our progress in strengthening and diversifying our economy. Similar to control over the development and management of our natural resources, we need a comprehensive economic development agreement to allow our territory the opportunity to develop our economic revenue base.

Further, we will continue our efforts to seek effective partnerships with the Government of Canada, our territorial counterparts and Inuit birthright organizations to foster greater awareness of the unique challenges of Nunavut and to stimulate further growth in all sources of revenue.

Mr. Speaker, there is an acute shortage of housing throughout our territory. And, as the principal supplier of housing in the territory, the Government of Nunavut plays the lead role in trying to find innovative solutions that would alleviate the chronic shortage of both privately owned and public housing units.

Currently, through the Nunavut Housing Corporation, the Government of Nunavut maintains close to 4,000 public housing units representing almost 50 percent of our total housing stock. More than 50 percent of our population lives in public housing. At the moment, Nunavut receives close to \$60 million annually from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation to help defray the cost of operating and maintaining the public

housing stock in the territory. Unfortunately, over time, the federal contribution will steadily decline, with significant decreases occurring five to ten years from now.

A new partnering arrangement with the federal government is needed to resolve the problems that will be created by the declining federal funding, and the chronic housing shortage that has historically plagued our communities.

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut needs to explore innovative partnerships with the federal government, the provinces, other territories, as well as other members of the circumpolar community and Inuit birthright organizations to resolve common problems, and to make the most of common opportunities.

Over the life of the First Legislative Assembly, we have seen numerous examples of these partnerships and the value that they have brought to Nunavut.

In October 2002, the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Agreement with the Government of Canada was signed in Coral Harbour. This is a partnership agreement that provides \$4.3 million of federal funding for the purpose of improving transportation infrastructure in Nunavut.

In the past two years, Nunavut has accessed more than \$2 million through the Canada-Nunavut Infrastructure Agreement for various municipal infrastructure projects and \$5 million over the past four years to support the training needs of municipal land administrators.

We also received more than \$17 million over the past four years from the Government of Canada for the Community Aerodrome Radio Program, and close to \$5 million for airport capital projects through the Airport Capital Assistance Program.

This funding provides much needed assistance, but much more is needed for us to keep pace with the needs of our communities.

We also have entered into two significant partnerships to explore the feasibility of developing two important road links in Nunavut.

Work on the Bathurst Inlet Port and Road Project is being advanced by a partnership comprised of the Kitikmeot Inuit Association, the Department of Sustainable Development, the Department of Community Government and Transportation, and the private sector.

The Nunavut-Manitoba Road Connection study involves a partnership comprised of the Kivalliq Inuit Association, the Province of Manitoba and the Department of Community Government and Transportation.

Both of these partnership arrangements require significant federal involvement and support.

Enhancing Government Operations

Mr. Speaker, I will now take a few minutes to recap a few of the steps we have taken during our first assembly to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations.

We have actively promoted a decentralized model of government that was conceived as one of the cornerstones for building the new government of Nunavut. I am pleased to report that over the past four years, 429 positions have been established in the ten communities that were designated for decentralized operations.

The Decentralization Secretariat in the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs provided strong leadership throughout this process. Major credit also goes to the departments, agencies and Crown corporations involved.

Decentralization provides communities with much-needed infrastructure and economic development, as well as employment and training opportunities.

We established the Nunavut Housing Corporation as a separate entity to ensure that the complexities and importance of housing in Nunavut would be given adequate profile and attention.

Last year, we folded the staff housing function into the corporation as well, in recognition of the fact that staff housing forms an integral part of the housing base in the territory.

We also established the Nunavut Power Corporation. More recently, we announced additional plans to consolidate major utility functions in the territory through the formation of the Qulliq Energy Corporation. This new energy corporation will be comprised of the Nunavut Power Corporation and the Petroleum Products Division, which is currently part of the Department of Public Works and Services.

The new corporation will provide more efficient management of energy in our territory, including greater emphasis on energy conservation and energy alternatives.

During the past four years, we also have worked hard to establish a sound foundation for future labour relations and stability in the work environment.

Since April 1, 1999, two new contracts have been successfully negotiated with the Federation of Nunavut Teachers and one agreement has been negotiated with the Nunavut Employees' Union.

We also have financed compensation settlements for a long-standing pay equity dispute and victims of a major abuse case. Both settlements relieve our Second Legislative Assembly of significant financial burdens and provide equitable compensation to affected individuals. We have dealt fairly and openly with the losses Nunavummiut experienced

due to bad gas. In short, we have lived up to our obligations, and have not passed on significant debts or unresolved issues to the next Assembly.

We committed to undertake the comprehensive government-wide program review to evaluate the programs and services we deliver. We have completed an extensive inventory of the programs and will continue in our efforts to seek greater efficiencies while ensuring overall effectiveness to meet Nunavummiut's needs.

This review, which is being coordinated by the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs and the Department of Finance, is near completion and the results will be presented to the Members of the Legislative Assembly in the coming months.

We will be taking additional measures to increase accountability and effectiveness of program delivery. This commitment to strengthen financial and program management, as well as accountability, extends across all operations, including Crown corporations.

A key component of this overall effort is the development of an information management strategy. This strategy will safeguard vital information needed to support effective decision-making.

Selected Program Highlights

Mr. Speaker, I would like to mention some of the other accomplishments of this First Assembly of the Government of Nunavut, particularly those that directly benefited individuals and families.

To safeguard our health:

- A new health facility is being built in Rankin Inlet. In addition, we are continuing to work with the Kitikmeot and Qikiqtani development corporations on the construction of a new health facility in Cambridge Bay and a new hospital in Iqaluit. These health facilities will cost in excess of \$80 million. Together with a residential care facility in Chesterfield Inlet, to be started this summer, and a fully equipped health centre in Arviat, which opened in 2001, and replacement of health centres in Pond Inlet and Igloolik, access to basic health care will be greatly expanded for all Nunavummiut.
- The Maternity Care Workers Program was introduced to train and develop qualified midwives. The birthing centre in Rankin Inlet is the first to offer dedicated midwifery services. Opportunities to expand this program into other communities throughout Nunavut are currently being explored and efforts are underway to broaden awareness of the midwifery services.

>>Applause

- Telehealth services were expanded to 15 communities in Nunavut, largely through an infusion of \$3.7 million in matching funds from the Government of Canada.
- A comprehensive Nunavut Tobacco Reduction Strategy was developed by the Department of Health and Social Services, including pending legislation for the restriction of the sale, promotion and accessibility of tobacco products to minors.

>>Applause

To ensure greater accessibility to affordable housing:

- Funds were added to expand the Nunavut Downpayment Assistance Program and we established a new staff condominium program, and a new tenant-to-owner program, to expand opportunities for home ownership.
- A new public housing rent scale was implemented in the past year.

Mr. Speaker, to encourage advanced education:

- The Financial Assistance to Nunavut Students Review was completed resulting in increased funding to more than 250 beneficiaries who are currently receiving post secondary financial support through the program.

>>Applause

- We supported the creation and development of the Akitsiraq Law School program by establishing partnerships between the government, the Akitsiraq Board, the University of Victoria and Nunavut Arctic College.
- The Nursing Program was introduced to prepare Inuit nurses to respond to the health care needs of Nunavummiut. The curriculum emphasizes awareness and respect for Inuit culture, and will prepare Inuit nurses to be leaders in the Nunavut health care system.

>>Applause

- We developed two internship programs, the Inuit Management Development Program and the Financial Internship Program, to encourage young beneficiaries to pursue a career in the public service.

To support economic development:

- The Department of Sustainable Development jointly with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, commissioned the Conference Board of Canada to prepare and release the *Nunavut Economic Outlook*, which examined our economy in detail and identified economic prospects.
- The department also developed the framework document for the Nunavut Economic Development Strategy, leading to the release of *The Naujaat Challenge*.

- The Nunavut Mining, Mineral Exploration and Geoscience Report was produced in partnership with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and the Canada-Nunavut Geoscience Office.
- The department is working with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, regional Inuit organizations, communities and the private sector, to prepare the Sivumut Economic Development Strategy. The strategy will help prepare the foundation for the development of the territorial economy over the next twenty years.
- In the past year, the Prospector Development Program was delivered in 13 communities with 143 graduates.

>>Applause

- Nunavut continues to be an active partner in Team Canada trade missions, where Premier Okalik promotes our growing mining, fishing, fur, and food processing and tourism economic sectors.
- Other key economic partnerships include the Baffin Fisheries Coalition, to take advantage of newly acquired quota in Davis Strait, and the agreement with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated on impact benefits from park development in the territory.

To support our culture:

- We have funded elders and youth conferences and exchanges including the Elders Nunavik-Nunavut gathering, and the annual Elders and Youth Gathering that was held in Igloolik.
- A settlement was negotiated with the Government of the Northwest Territories on the division of cultural assets currently housed in the Prince of Wales Heritage Centre in Yellowknife.
- The Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth is continuing to develop the Living Dictionary with over 40,000 terms searchable in Inuktitut, English and French. Of note, The Living Dictionary for Nunavut, *Asuilak*, received a national award for innovative technical and service delivery in the public sector.
- We also provided support to the Nunavut Youth Abroad Program that last year saw 20 Nunavut youth billeted with families in the south to broaden career aspirations and to enhance cross-cultural awareness levels.

To promote community safety:

- We expanded the RCMP services in the communities, opening a new detachment in Repulse Bay and re-opening the detachments in Grise Fiord, Kimmirut and Kugaaruk.

>>Applause

To assist families and individuals:

- A Daycare Review was completed by the Department of Education. As a direct consequence, the number of licensed daycare facilities expanded from 30 to 47, and the number of childcare spaces increased from 691 to 990.

>> *Applause*

- A compensation package was developed for individuals who experienced engine trouble as the result of bad gas. To date, more than 2,100 claims have been processed.

Fiscal Update for 2002-2003

Mr. Speaker, I will now briefly review our fiscal performance for the 2002-2003 fiscal year.

As I indicated in the October 2002 Fiscal Update, Nunavut's short-term fiscal situation has weakened since the time of the budget last April.

This is the result of two factors. Revenues are lower than budgeted, and expenditures are higher.

Projected total revenues for 2002-2003 have been revised down to \$728.5 million from \$745.5 million, due to lower projections of transfer payments from the Government of Canada.

Our formula financing revenues dropped by \$26.3 million while own-source revenues and other federal transfers increased by \$8.2 million and \$1.2 million, respectively, since the budget.

Nunavut began the 2002-2003 fiscal year with an accumulated operating surplus of \$96.2 million. This was largely the result of one-time savings and increased federal transfers during 1999-2000 to 2001-2002. This surplus allowed the government to invest more on needed capital and other strategic investments, than it received in revenues during the current fiscal year.

At the time of our April budget, prior to making strategic investments, we were projecting an operating surplus for the year to be \$1.5 million. We are now projecting an \$82 million operating deficit, which will reduce our 2002-2003 accumulated surplus to \$14.2 million by year-end.

Lower revenue projections account for \$17 million of this change, and approved expenditure appropriations account for \$57 million. The remainder is the result of changes in other supplementary requirements and appropriation lapses.

Of the projected \$80.5 million increase in expenditures since the budget, \$51.6 million was spent on capital projects and \$5.3 million on operating expenditures. An additional \$23.6 million in supplementary funding will be considered during this Session of the Legislative Assembly. The expenditures approved to date include:

- \$16.4 million for staff housing;
- \$5.9 million for the three health facilities;
- \$4 million to fund the current year portion of the Iqaluit Block Funding Agreement;
- \$3.7 million for the Pond Inlet sewage lagoon;
- \$1.6 million to implement the bad gas compensation plan;
- \$1.7 million for the Baker Lake Learning Centre;
- \$1.3 million increase in the base budget of Nunavut Arctic College;
- \$1.4 million to fund the first year of the collective agreement with the Federation of Nunavut Teachers; and
- \$1.4 million for our contribution to the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Agreement.

The \$23.6 million Supplementary Appropriation to be considered by the Legislature in the current session includes:

- \$10 million in funding for the Department of Health and Social Services to fund ongoing programs;
- \$6 million for purchase of the Sivumut Building;
- \$4.7 million related to compensation for and removal of bad gas;
- \$1.6 million in response to the recent fires in Clyde River and Repulse Bay; and
- \$800,000 for the Department of Justice to cover additional costs related to inmates and court services.

Budget plan for 2003-2004

Mr. Speaker, I will now present our budget plans for Nunavut's fifth year of operation.

Nunavut expects to collect \$804.5 million in revenues from all sources in the coming fiscal year, which represents an 8 percent increase from last year's budget of \$745.5 million. It includes a \$31.8 million increase in revenue from the Formula Financing Agreement and at least \$9 million of new funding we expect from the Health Accord. Nunavut's tax and other own-source revenues are forecast to be \$11.3 million higher than budgeted last year. Planned expenditures are expected to be \$843.1 million, resulting in an unadjusted deficit of \$38.6 million.

After adjusting for estimated appropriation lapses of \$27 million, the operating deficit for 2003-2004 is expected to be \$11.6 million. At the end of 2003-2004, we are now forecasting an accumulated operating surplus of only \$2.7 million. This means that we will have used and depleted our accumulated surplus.

We did not raise taxes during our first four years of operation, and this budget contains no tax measures.

In the Budget Address for 2002, we promised to introduce changes to the *Income Tax Act* and, we introduced changes that significantly lowered the territorial income tax rates for personal and corporate taxation.

The implementation of the 2002 income tax measures gave us the lowest tax rates in Canada. These reductions are benefiting all taxpayers in our territory and are helping to strengthen our economy.

Mr. Speaker, our expenditure plan for the 2003-2004 fiscal year is comprised of an operating budget of \$700 million and a capital budget of \$143.1 million.

As in all previous budgets, the Departments of Education and Health and Social Services together with the Nunavut Housing Corporation received more than half of the total budget, consistent with our priorities.

I would now like to highlight departmental funding and some of the more significant initiatives that are planned for the upcoming year.

The Department of Education's operating budget for 2003-2004 will increase by \$7.4 million to \$160 million.

>> *Applause*

Over \$4 million of this increase will be allocated to school operations. An additional \$2 million will be utilized for curriculum and resource development related to the Language of Instruction Initiative.

Mr. Speaker, Inuit language is a cornerstone of Inuit culture and a key priority of our education system. The many Inuit teachers who have graduated from the Nunavut Teachers Education Program, as well as the Inuuqatigiit Curriculum Foundation and an Elders advisory committee support our efforts. Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit principles are being integrated into new curriculum being developed.

>> *Applause*

Nunavut Arctic College receives its operating revenue from many sources. For 2003-2004, the College will be provided with base funding of almost \$15.6 million through the Department of Education. After other program funding is added, government support for Nunavut Arctic College for 2003-2004 will be \$17.5 million.

The Nunavut Research Institute is also an important part of the College providing leadership in developing, facilitating and promoting traditional knowledge, science, research and technology as resources for the well being of all Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, we know that the welfare of our territory depends on having healthy communities. This is why the Department of Health and Social Services has been provided with a total budget of \$207.4 million. Included in this amount is \$151.6 million for operations, \$46.3 million for capital funding requirements for the three new health facilities, and \$9.5 million for other capital expenditures.

The department has received additional funding for the nursing retention strategy, outreach detoxification services with a minimal residential component and the creation of a decentralized medical travel office.

The department is planning to expand the Maternity Care Workers Program leading to qualified midwives in a number of communities.

>>*Applause*

In the upcoming year, the feasibility of expanding the program to additional communities throughout Nunavut will be explored. As well, we will continue to implement our mental health and addictions strategy and expand the services of outreach programs with an increased emphasis on suicide prevention. We will engage traditional healers and elders in communities to assist us in our efforts to address these critical issues and in the implementation of measures to meet these challenges.

>>*Applause*

The Nunavut Housing Corporation has committed to delivering housing solutions to Nunavummiut as a key priority of this government. For fiscal 2003-2004, operations spending for the Nunavut Housing Corporation will total \$133.7 million.

The Corporation will continue counselling and assisting public housing tenants who are ready to own their homes to participate in the new tenant- to-owner program. The many revisions and improvements to the public housing rent scale will be carefully monitored during this first year of implementation.

The Staff Housing Condominium Program will be delivered in ten of Nunavut's decentralized communities. By the fall of 2003, almost 160 new affordable condominium units will be available for purchase and occupancy.

The Corporation continues its commitment to develop and implement a staff housing rent scale that is sensitive to the housing needs of staff, and is in step with the public housing rent scale.

Operations funding for social housing also has kept pace with our expanded capital program. Almost \$1.4 million in additional funding will be available to local housing organizations to meet the needs of the new housing units, bringing the total contribution to those organizations to over \$63.2 million.

>>*Applause*

The Department of Justice has been provided a total budget of \$47.6 million, which represents a \$2.7 million increase over last year's budget. The operating portion of the budget is \$46.1 million.

We have increased funding for law enforcement by \$1.4 million. This additional funding will enable the RCMP to open two new detachments in Whale Cove and Chesterfield Inlet.

>> *Applause*

Mr. Speaker, this will mean that we will now have an RCMP detachment in each of our communities.

>> *Applause*

Funding is also provided through the capital budget for the planning and design of a new courthouse for Nunavut.

An increase of \$500,000 will help cover the salaries for community corrections positions and to address the costs of inmates outside of Nunavut.

The Department of Human Resources has been given a budget of \$19.4 million for fiscal 2003-2004. Mr. Speaker, the monies allocated for the Inuit Employment Plan and training account for almost one-third of this budget.

>> *Applause*

The department is responsible for the implementation, management and monitoring of Article 23 initiatives, training and development, and coordination of initiatives in all departments. The department manages its own Inuit Management Development Program and is assisting the Department of Finance in the implementation of the Financial Internship Program, aimed at placing more beneficiaries in financial management positions.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Culture, Language, Elders, and Youth has been allocated nearly \$10.3 million for 2003-2004. This represents a funding increase of \$1 million, or more than 11 percent when compared to last year.

The department is creating a comprehensive strategy that will coordinate the government's efforts in the areas of Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and language. In the coming year the department will provide over \$2.5 million in grants and contributions to empower communities and support initiatives and programs related to heritage, youth, elders, language, women, arts, toponymy, communications and the disabled.

For the 2003-04 fiscal year, \$37.8 million has been allocated to the Department of Sustainable Development. Of this amount, \$35.3 million has been budgeted for operations and \$2.5 million for capital projects.

Over 46 percent of the department's budget has been earmarked for grants and contributions. In total, the department has allocated \$16.3 million dollars to grants and contributions.

>> *Applause*

The department will continue to support the development of local economies by dedicating \$2.9 million to the Community Initiatives Program. Another \$2.4 million will be provided to municipalities for community economic development staff and community planning.

Nearly \$3.5 million will be provided to the Nunavut Development Corporation to support and develop community-based businesses and economic opportunities.

The department will continue investing in Nunavut's traditional land-based economy, providing funding support to the hunters and trappers' organizations, the Community Harvester Assistance Program, the Regional Wildlife Boards, and the Nunavut Arts and Crafts Association.

Similarly, key investments will be made to ensure the continued development of our commercial renewable and non-renewable resources through funding contributions to the Fisheries Development and Diversification Program, the Commercial Fisheries Program, and the Prospectors Assistance Program.

This budget also commits to keeping tourism delivery funding at last year's enhanced level of \$2.4 million.

>> *Applause*

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Community Government and Transportation is primarily responsible for programs and services that support the delivery of municipal services to Nunavut's communities.

For 2003-2004, the department will have a budget of \$99.2 million, with \$72 million allocated for operations.

The 2003-2004 allocation includes a grants and contributions budget of \$40.1 million. Over \$24.5 million of the \$40.1 million is allocated to the Municipal Operating Assistance Program. The department has increased the contribution to this program by \$3.8 million from last year, an 18.4 percent increase, to help cover insurance, pension and other rising costs of municipalities. This will be the first increase to the municipalities' basic operating grant since 1995.

>> *Applause*

The department's capital budget is \$27.2 million, a \$10 million increase from last year. The priority for this much needed investment is basic water and sewage projects in our communities.

The Department of Public Works and Services has been allocated \$60.9 million for operations, and \$10.7 million in capital for the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

The department has allocated \$2.8 million to the systems development function that was recently transferred from the Department of Finance. This will consolidate informatics technology in the Department of Public Works and Services and will provide for more streamlined services.

Also, \$500,000 has been allocated for the start-up of Qulliq Energy Corporation and the devolution from Public Works and Services of the Petroleum Products Division.

Mr. Speaker, we have developed and are implementing a comprehensive five-year capital plan. During our mandate we have allocated \$450 million to capital projects. For the 2002-2003 fiscal year, \$122 million was allocated for capital and \$143 million for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. This high level of capital spending was financed in large part by our accumulated operating surplus, which amounted to \$96.2 million at the end of the 2001-2002 fiscal year.

Consistent with the priorities of this government, this capital was allocated, as follows: \$106 million to the Nunavut Housing Corporation, \$99 million to the Department of Education, \$76 million to the Department of Health and Social Services, and \$106 million to the Department of Community Government and Transportation.

>>*Applause*

The much-needed homes, schools, health facilities and community infrastructure projects resulting from the strategic capital investments were accomplished without having to incur direct debt.

Mr. Speaker, I referred earlier to the need for additional assistance from the Government of Canada to help us get the infrastructure needed for us to develop the full potential of our economy and population. Without this investment, it would be impossible for us to maintain the same level of capital spending that we have made in 2002-2003 and have budgeted next year. We have no accumulated reserves to invest.

Our capacity to generate extra tax revenues is limited in the short term and we do not want to or have the option to accumulate significant levels of debt.

Before moving to my concluding remarks, I will briefly reference the budget allocation of the Department of Finance and the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs.

The operating budget for the Department of Finance will be \$44.5 million, compared to \$47.4 million in 2002-2003. This drop is due to the transfer of information technology system development to the Department of Public Works and Services. About 55 percent of the departmental budget is expenditures, which are government-wide in nature, including power subsidies, commercial leases and employee benefits.

The 2003-2004 budget for the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs is \$10.5 million, compared to \$11.1 million in the preceding year. This decline is primarily due to the completion of program review.

While these two central departments have primary responsibility for ensuring strong financial management, accountability and effective decision-making in our government, we recognize that we all share responsibility in that regard. Members of this Legislative Assembly, departments, agencies and Crown corporations each play a key role in meeting this important responsibility.

Concluding Remarks

Mr. Speaker, this is the fifth and final budget under the mandate of our First Legislative Assembly. It respects the principles upon which Nunavut was created, advances the goals of the Bathurst Mandate and carries the tradition of sound financial management and responsible decision-making from Nunavut's first four years. We have witnessed a very important period in our history and have played a key role in ensuring a sound foundation for future generations.

The next challenge in our evolution is to ensure sustainability given limited revenue resources and ever pressing needs of a young and rapidly growing population dispersed across a vast geographic area.

One of the key achievements under this first mandate involves the strategic use of accumulated surpluses to provide much-needed social and economic infrastructure to support future generations. However, our capacity to meet increasing expenditures is limited and will require strong fiscal discipline and accountability into the next mandate.

Mr. Speaker, we will continue to face new and exciting challenges in Nunavut's evolution. However, we always will have these initial years to remind us of how much can be achieved in such a short period through the joint efforts of a committed Legislative Assembly, a dedicated public service and the support of all Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Ng. Item 3. Ministers' Statements. Item 4. Members' Statements. Members' Statements. Mr. McLean.

Item 4: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 386 – 1(6): Mining Strategy to Support Training Programs

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a hard act to follow. Mr. Speaker, today, I would like to update the House on my recent attendance with other Members of the Standing Committee on Community Empowerment and Sustainable Development at the annual Convention of the Prospectors and Development Association of Canada.

This important meeting brings together representatives of government and industry to discuss issues related to mining. I was pleased to see representatives from the Department of Sustainable Development, Kitikmeot Corporation, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated and the Bathurst Inlet Port/Road Project just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut was well represented at the convention. It is clear that exploration will lead to the development of mining in Nunavut. This is an exciting time in our territory.

The energy level was high at this convention. Accordingly, in the Finance Minister's budget, \$215 million dollars has been spent on exploration in Nunavut over the last four years, which I think is no small amount.

Mr. Speaker, this convention gave me the opportunity to speak to many people in the mining sector, but they told me the same thing that I have heard many times before. In fact, Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I have stood up in this House on numerous occasions and we have said the same thing, over and over again, and I do not know if we have been heard.

Mr. Speaker, we are getting frustrated, but we are going to try this one more time. Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that the key to economic development in Nunavut is preparing our constituents to join the work force.

We have seen the same thing time and time again. New sectors open up and qualified people are brought up from the south to do work that Nunavummiut should be trained to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want that to happen again, but it will if we don't get our act together and formulate a solid mining strategy that focuses on training. In addition, Mr. Speaker, diamond exploration is forth coming in the Hall Beach and Igloolik area.

This is an exciting development and I strongly encourage the government to take steps to ensure that the private sector in these communities are prepared to take advantage of increased traffic by exploration companies.

Mr. Speaker, I don't want our government planning a mining strategy twenty years from now after the opportunities have been wasted. We need a mining strategy and training programs to support it now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Item 4. Members' Statements. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Member's Statement 387 – 1(6): Gratitude for Minister's Budget Address

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the budget address that we have just heard, we have started to meet the needs of the people of Nunavut, which I am very proud of.

We are now starting to progress for the betterment of the people of Nunavut, but in regards to housing, and with the decreasing amount of federal dollars that will be coming, I think we have to start thinking about bringing in lumber to Nunavut.

We don't have mills and we don't have trees and I think it would be a good idea to start manufacturing lumber in order to meet the critical housing shortage we have here in Nunavut.

I would like to thank the Minister for the budget address and some of the initiatives that the government has taken. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Mr. Havioyak.

Member's Statement 388 – 1(6): Funding for Hunters and Trappers' Associations Inadequate

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will make my statement brief. (interpretation ends) I rise today on an issue of great importance. Members are well aware of my support for jobs for Nunavummiut in the mining sector. I was pleased to note the recent signing of an agreement between NTI and Strongbow Resources for exploration in the Kitikmeot.

However, Mr. Speaker, the flip side of the development is the effect that the development will have on the environment. Many Nunavummiut rely on the land and its' bounty to support themselves and their families.

Mr. Speaker, Hunters and Trappers Associations are the backbone of conservation in Nunavut and we are expecting them to fulfill whatever increasing responsibilities without an increase to their operation budgets.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that the funding level has not increased in anticipation of moving mineral exploration activities. Even prior to the increase in the mineral exploration, funding was inadequate.

Regarding the HTO in my community responsible for reviewing land use applications, there are too many applications and not enough staff to process them in a timely manner. The HTOs cannot afford to hire additional staff and therefore cannot effectively review the land use applications.

Mr. Speaker, I am further concerned that the funding issues will be difficult to address because HTO funding is through the Wildlife Management Board with the contribution from the Government of Nunavut, Department of Sustainable Development. Clearly direction will have to be given by the Department to see HTO has the support they require.

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister of Sustainable Development a question on this issue at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Mr. Irqittuq.

Member's Statement 389 – 1(6): Utilize Private Sector from Nunavut Communities

Mr. Irqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If my relatives and my immediate family members are watching the proceedings this afternoon, I say hello.

I would also like to thank my colleague, Mr. McLean, for making a statement on the symposium that we just attended a few days ago in regards to the mining industry.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to make a statement about the diamond exploration that will be happening on Melville Peninsula. I just had a meeting recently and I think that we are going to have to move expeditiously if we are going to be involved or take benefits from the spin-offs that will come out from that exploration.

For the people of Nunavut, I think it is critical that the mining explorers utilize the private sector in the Nunavut communities, especially the communities of Igloolik and Hall Beach.

In regards to the private sectors that are being hired or contracted and sent up here to work, I do not think that is a good idea. We have to utilize the private sector from the Nunavut communities.

And I will want strong support from the Government so that there will be dialogue between the mining companies and the exploration committees and also to work intently on the environmental issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Mr. Tootoo. Members' Statements. Mr. Puqiqnak.

Member's Statement 390 – 1(6): Long Term Service Awards in Gjoa Haven and Taloyoak

Mr. Puqiqnak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have quite a lot of things that I would like to speak to because I was the Speaker for a number of days in the beginning. I would like to thank within my constituencies, the settlements of Gjoa Haven and Taloyoak.

In Taloyoak and Gjoa Haven there were presentations of recognition awards held in the month of February for those who had provided long-term service. I would like to acknowledge and recognize the Human Resources Department for awarding their employees for their long-term service, they have provided within the different departments of Nunavut. In Taloyoak on February 19th, 2003, there were five recipients of this award. I congratulate them. They are:

- Dallas Taqtu who received a five year service award
- Roger Manilak who received a ten year service award
- Joe Ashevak and Annie Buchan both received a ten year service award
- Iola Taqulik received a thirty-year service award.

In Gjoa Haven on February 20th, 2003, there were seven recipients of the long-term service award. I congratulate the following:

- Rosie Nuliyuk and Agnes Porter for their five year service award
- Susan Hillier received a ten year service award
- Eliyak Hikinik and Joannie Saniriniq both received a fifteen year service award
- Alan Aglukark received a twenty year service award
- David Buchan received a thirty-year long-term service award.

I congratulate the public service employees for their foundation and keeping visible in their community. The price of success is hard work, dedication for the job at hand, and determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand.

I would like to make a brief comment on the Budget Address on the enhancement of Government Operations. I seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement Mr. Speaker?

Speaker: The Member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? Just a caution to remember that your statement should be continued in the same line of thought that you started with.

Mr. Puqiqnak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also would like to thank my colleagues. With the presentation of recognition awards from five to thirty years, I am looking forward for them to work many more years.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Mr. Arvaluk.

Member's Statement 391 – 1(6): Funding for Post Secondary and Technical Training for All Nunavummiut

Mr. Arvaluk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Finance Minister and the government for taking on partnerships, especially with the Federal Government. And somehow our constituents benefit from that, for example in Coral Harbour, with the new terminal and the renovation of the terminal garage and the access road in Chesterfield Inlet that was announced earlier this year and other partnerships that the Minister has mentioned.

However, the partnership and cooperation seems to lack within the Nunavut Government itself, or the department. Coral Harbour, last year tried to get funding from the Department of Education through the assistance of Arctic College to have the Manitoba College run a welding course in Coral Harbour, so that the students don't have to leave to Fort Smith or elsewhere and the instructor would have been brought in.

The answer was that we run those kinds of courses as Nunavut Arctic College somewhere else. It may be in Fort Smith or elsewhere, so we can't approve you having a partnership with the Manitoba College to carry on your local welding course.

There may be other examples of lack of cooperation from other departments and agencies that could have been very easily dealt with a bit of imagination. We don't blame you as a government, or Nunavut Arctic College but sometimes they don't have the readily available expertise. I think from the Minister's budget address, that in the future we will be a little bit more open, and have a little more initiative in trying to get more post-secondary training and technical training for all Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Mr. Nutarak.

Member's Statement 392 – 1(6): Explanation of Questions during Question Period

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to explain a little bit about the questions that I ask the Ministers. It seems like questions that I ask of the Ministers are long-winded, so if I could explain that sometimes when I ask a question, I try to explain the situation properly to ensure that my questions are understood. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Are there any further Members' Statements? If not, we will move onto Item 5. Returns to Oral Questions. Members' Statements. Mr. Alakannuark.

Member's Statement 393 – 1(6): Past Incidents in Repulse Bay

Mr. Alakannuark (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank you for allowing me to make my Members' Statement and I will talk about my constituents of Repulse Bay.

There was an event that happened that was very hard for the people of Repulse Bay. I would like to help them because they are my constituents. Here are the things that happened to the people of Repulse Bay.

The hamlet office as well as the community hall burnt down on December 24, 2002. They also had an incident where the telephone communications were down shortly after that.

Also, they had a power outage afterwards and they had to go through hardship for a while. They have rectified those problems that they had a little while ago in Repulse Bay and I would like to say that it is very encouraging that they are in a better position now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Alakannuark. Member Statements. Are there any further Member Statements? Minister Ng.

Member's Statement 394 – 1(6): Presentation of Kamiks

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You gave me the liberty in my role as a Finance Minister as well, but I am using the Member's Statements forum because Members do not get an opportunity to see the media lock up that happens with Finance Ministers.

And the presentation of the kamiks, which took place earlier, I asked for Members, before it is reported, I asked the eldest Member of our legislature, Mr. Alakannuark to find a pair of kamiks from Repulse Bay and because we used kamiks this time has double the significance.

Mr. Speaker, first of all there has never been any kamiks used from the Kivalliq, second of all, Repulse Bay, as you know, is a non-decentralized community.

And as well, they had the tragedy with the loss of their hamlet complex there. So, in recognition of rebuilding in Repulse Bay, that is why I chose it and asked Mr. Alakannuark to assist me.

As well, Mr. Speaker, when it was learned that I was looking for a pair of used kamiks, our Commissioner, Peter Irniq offered a pair of his and of course, we graciously accepted that.

And he said to me, Mr. Irniq said that this was another Inuit custom of helping out somebody else and borrowing and sharing and so that is why he offered it, but I think that was symbolic.

And as well, Mr. Speaker, this year, we did something different as well in that recognizing the future, our youth that we have all talked about, I asked a young lady to present a boutonniere to myself as part of the media celebration.

And that was Ms. Amy Alainga, who I believe is about five years old, six years old, I could be corrected, but anyways, a young lady that represents the future of our territory also participated in the ceremony. So, I just wanted to let Members be aware of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Thank you, Minister Ng. Members' Statements. Ms. Thompson.

Member's Statement 395 – 1(6): Thanks the Minister of Finance for Hard Work

Hon. Manitok Thompson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Finance presented our last Budget Address and was very welcoming for the people of Nunavut and I would like to also say that it has been a trying time for the 19 of us and we have accomplished a lot for a young territory.

I would like to thank the Minister of Finance for the careful planning of our budget that we have used during our term in our office. And for it to continue for the next Assembly, to continue properly and I would like to also say thank you for giving us information about the new health facility that is going to be built in Rankin Inlet.

As you know, they need to have people trained and employed and that should be happening when the construction begins. I would also like to state that in Chesterfield Inlet and in Whale Cove, especially in Whale Cove, we did not have a RCMP station there and they have been requesting the RCMP to be stationed over there for quite a while and their accommodation is being built right now and I would like to say that I greatly appreciate that as well.

And also, thank you very much to the Finance Minister. They should have all of their roses today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Member Statements. Item 5: Returns to Oral Questions. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 6: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Minister Picco.

Item 6: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to welcome to the gallery, one person who needs no introduction to the Members in this House; she is Ms. Anne Hanson. Anne has been working tremendously on a lot of issues over the last few years. She was the former Deputy Commissioner of the Northwest Territories. Anne has been working on an IMAX Film that many Members have heard about. I just had a short discussion with her on that film.

She's still looking forward and awaiting some news from myself, as her Member of the Legislative Assembly on how that will proceed. We are working on that. I would also like to add very quickly Mr. Speaker, an introduction to Anne. She gave a very good book to read on the issue concerning suicide, which we will have an opportunity to talk about again this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, people like Anne are the people who are in the constituency that I have an opportunity to talk to and take advice from. Also, in that vein, there is a good man here who's represented people here for many years.

I met him first as the principal in Cape Dorset about 15 years ago. He's now the president and leader of the Nunavut Employees Union. I am sure he's here for budget day. His name is Mr. Doug Workman. Next to Doug, Mr. Speaker, is Lootie Toomasi, the good mayor from Qikiqtarjuaq.

There is another man, Mr. Rick Lefevre who is now a constituent of mine in Iqaluit. He used to live in Tundra Valley, he and his good wife. They've moved to Iqaluit. Mr. Lefevre is the facilitator for First Air, known by many of the Members here. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome those individuals to the gallery today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Welcome to the gallery. Item 6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my grandson in Clyde River and some people named Iqaqrialu after my father and as well Lootie Toomasi from Broughton Island but now living in Iqaluit. I would like to recognize them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Members before we continue onto the next item, we will take a twenty-minute break and then return.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 14:48 p.m. and resumed at 15:14 p.m.*

Speaker: Orders of the day. Item 7. Oral Questions. Mr. Nutarak.

Item 7: Oral Questions

Question 389 – 1(6): Presentation of Kamiks to Finance Minister

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for the Department of Finance.

First of all, I would like to extend my gratitude that he mentioned Pond Inlet in his Budget Address and he spoke about, in his Member's Statement, a little girl and of Mr. Alakannuark presenting him with kamiks and a little rose. The audience in the public land out there wanted to see what kind of kamiks he's wearing, so I was wondering if he is able to show the kamiks he's wearing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Laughter*

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Nutarak. I am sure on the way out Mr. Ng would be more than pleased to show his kamiks. Oral Questions. Mr. Arvaluk.

Question 390 – 1(6): Update on Dogs Destroyed by the Federal Government

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hear that he's wearing black kamiks with no fur, made of sealskin. I don't know what you call it.

I have a question for the Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs to the Premier. Mr. Iqittuq along with Mr. Iqaqrialu as well and myself have made statements in regards to the dog teams being killed off by the Federal Government.

After mentioning these incidents, to date, can he update me on whether they are doing any studies along with the Federal Government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have not been asked to date. The Inuit organizations have not asked us for any support but we are willing to assist them if they ask. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I am trying to consider, I know that this is going to be a long task to deal with and it is a very old issue.

It seems like they extinguished the lives of Inuit. Even when Inuit hunters came from the camps, when they went to the settlements, the officials would kill the dogs. I was wondering if the Minister was willing to create a commission.

For example, using long time political people such as John Amagoalik in the commission, along with lawyers, so I ask whether they can come up with a commission for that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Premier Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I can look into that but it is the Inuit organizations that took on that responsibility and they took the lead on that issue.

We will have to be very sensitive to their requests, so therefore, we will have to speak with the Inuit entities first and if they can complete their proposals, even though we are not involved with them, we have to work closely with them, so therefore I can't say whether we will or not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our friend who was involved, Alan Angmalik, who has passed away and since he passed away, I don't know if Inuit organizations are working hard to this effect.

I was wondering if the Premier can speak with the Inuit organizations to make sure that this is fast tracked. Mr. Speaker, my question is, that the individual's whose dog teams were killed off are now elders and their dogs were slaughtered.

I am sure that they do not have many years to live. I was wondering if this issue can be completed before these individuals die off?

So, I was wondering if the Premier can speak with the Inuit organizations whether Government of Nunavut and Inuit organizations can work together to lobby the Federal Government. Thank you.

Speaker: Premier Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we can look into the Inuit organizations and ask them if they need support and assistance in their endeavours.

I know that this has an impact on everyone's family such as mine and there was a negative impact with the slaughtering of the dogs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions Supplementary. Final supplementary. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think every person is equally, negatively impacted by this because the individuals we deal with, are the individuals who have been hurt by the slaughtering of the dogs.

And also, we deal with Chesterfield Inlet boarding school, residential school students and also, there were other incidents that Inuit people experienced. I think this is one of the last issues that have yet to be reconciled. So, I was wondering when he will be able to deal with this. Thank you.

Speaker: Mr. Premier.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I can write a letter to the entities that are responsible and individuals because yes, we have been dealing with different issues such as relocation of the graves in Hall Beach.

For those kinds of incidents, yes, we will be able to work on these issues and as the Nunavut Government, we can lobby the Federal Government to complete this by working together with the Inuit entities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions, Mr. Puqiqnak.

Question 391 - 1(6): Furniture and Supplies for Taloyoak Drop-In Centre

Mr. Puqiqnak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth Minister. In my riding in Taloyoak, there is a drop-in center, which is owned by a private business.

And as Nunavummiut, especially when we start our businesses privately, we do not have all of the equity to start up a business in Taloyoak, and this center will be used by the youth.

I was wondering if the Department can give support to buy furniture and supplies since that unit is going to be used by the youth. So, I was wondering if the Minister can look into if they can purchase furniture and supplies for that drop-in center. Thank you.

Speaker: Minister.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can respond by using either portfolio that I hold and in regards to the Small Business Initiative of the Department Sustainable Development, they can be given \$5,000 grant as a start up initiative and we can use that program in this instance.

And secondly, for the portfolio of Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, the program that is geared more towards Heritage and Culture, so in regards to your question, it could provide initiative program through the Department of Sustainable Development so that we can look at how we can provide more support to private businesses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Supplementary. Mr. Puqiqnak.

Mr. Puqiqnak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that response. We should be sensitive to the needs of the Taloyoak Hamlet Council because they, in turn, have been very sensitive to their youth by providing assistance and support even though the hamlet itself is in a deficit situation. They have provided the unit to the youth.

They have paid for six months heating fuel for that place. Even though they have paid for six months heating fuel, on top of that, they need one thousand dollars for the operations of the unit.

Even though they are in a deficit situation, they have provided funding because they are in support of that program. I believe that your department is responsible for giving support and assistance to the private businesses.

I was wondering if you can look into the Youth Drop-in Centre in Taloyoak to find out how you can give better assistance and support to the hamlet council there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will direct my officials to work with the community to look into how they can give further assistance and support to private businesses.

As a Government, one of our priorities is to give assistance to the private businesses, especially to the non-decentralized communities. I could work with the Member along with my officials working closely with the community. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Mr. Havioyak.

Question 392 - 1(6): Funding Allocations for the HTOs

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Department of Sustainable Development in regards to core funding for Hunters and Trappers Organizations in our region. I would like to ask the Minister because of the fact that each community has different core funding for their own organizations.

What I would like to ask him is how does the budget work? How does he allocate the funding for each local HTO? How does he come up with the total of that funding that he allocates to local HTO's in our region? Thank you.

Speaker: Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is a very excellent question from the Member for Kugluktuk; I will try to respond accordingly.

There has not been much change to the monies that are given to the Hunters and Trappers Organizations from our department. We will be dealing with the budget in the coming weeks. The monies are given from our department for the operations of Hunters and Trappers Organizations. What is starting to happen is that the monies are given to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, and then reallocated to the Nunavut HTO's.

I am sure that we have not completed the negotiations for the funding that the NWMB receive from the Federal Government. But I will have discussions to see how we can increase the amount of dollars that are received for the Hunters and Trappers Organizations.

We do all we can to provide adequate funding to the local Hunters and Trappers Organizations and we will see what we can do to increase the amount of dollars through discussions with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe I did not make myself quite clear but I appreciate your response.

I am glad of your recognition that the funding allocated to the Hunters and Trappers Organization is very small and although they try to operate with this funding, it is never enough. Do you know exactly how much each community gets?

For example, for administration, their employees and for maintenance, operations and so on, do you know how much money they use for maintenance and administration? Like I said earlier, each community has different operational requirements and business plans. This is the question I am asking.

What I am trying to ask is if you know how much a community gets in order to operate their organization? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Mr. Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are aware that the communities have different requirements and that the Hunters and Trappers Organizations get a varying amount of dollars. We give approximately 300 thousand

dollars from the Federal Government that is channelled through Nunavut Wildlife Management Board to contribute to the HTOs.

In regards to your question, concerning the amount of dollars that each community receives from the government coffers, I can say that the three hundred thousand dollars received from the Nunavut Government is then given to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, who allocate it to the rest of the communities. I will be able to answer in greater detail when I am reviewing the figures of the main estimates with you.

I estimate they get 10 thousand dollars plus, based on the previous allocations, that were allocated per Nunavut community. The money is channelled through the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board and allocated to the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to clarify from the Minister. The question I am asking, regarding the community of Kugluktuk, do you know how much money is allocated for operations and maintenance in the Hunters and Trappers Organization, so that we have an idea how much they get allocated?

Perhaps, there is only one person working in that office and the money is not enough to operate for the Hunters and Trappers Organization in that community. In order for them to review the numerous land use applications with a very limited amount of money to operate with, they have had to be creative.

They cannot hire any more staff. I would like to see funding increased so that they can use money for their operations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe I will say it in English As I stated earlier on my statement, the HTO's that do not have enough funding to operate, only the examples are used in that statement, was that the HTO has the responsibilities to review these land use applications.

And at that office in Kugluktuk, I am using Kugluktuk as an example, in Kugluktuk they have piles of land use applications that they have to review so they could have their input before the land use application is usually approved.

So, I am just saying, I mean, the HTO's will not have enough funding to hire the staff to review these applications. Can the Minister find ways to assist that community to increase funding to hire the individual HTO? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I could do a review and see where we can give further support to the Hunters and Trappers Organizations. We are doing all we can to assist the local Hunters and Trappers Organizations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Final supplementary. Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak: I am glad you are trying to keep up as to what the HTO needs are in each community. All I am saying is: can you review and also have information as to where the levels of funding are for each HTO in Nunavut? Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Havioyak. Just pointing information to the Members that when the RCMP Job Placements are difficult for the Minister to have that type of detail and it may be better asked through a written question and that way, your question will be fully answered and the Minister will be able to provide details. Minister Akesuk, do you want to provide some information?

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The local Hunters and Trappers Organizations finances can be made available only if the local Hunters and Trappers Organizations release them.

It would be up to the communities to release that information, but they are channelled through other organizations before they are given to the communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions, Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Question 393 - 1(6): Provide Information on New Rent Scales

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was not expecting my turn so fast. Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Minister responsible for Nunavut Housing Corporation.

At the Housing Task Force, we made a few recommendations in January 2001, I believe it was, but as a committee, there has been no improvement to what was expected by the tenants in Clyde River. In fact, I've heard the situation has deteriorated.

Is it possible to see what kind of work plans or revised rent scales you have implemented so that my community will know what the new rent scales are going to be? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there was confirmation in every community in my understanding, during and before the implementation of the new rent scale.

That has not happened in Clyde River, certainly, we will make sure that it does, but it is my understanding that it has been carried out throughout Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to the consultation tour that took place, is it possible to come up with the recommendations you heard from the communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would have to see what information is available, but there were representatives of every single housing authority that took part in workshops, various workshops on more than one occasion as the rent scale was put into place and developed.

But I will check on that to see what information is available and particularly, what is available as a result of the tour recommendations of his community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister responsible for his appropriate response.

If the housing task force made recommendations and we have a new rent scale that we are not supposed to have, then something is wrong. This was the form that was given to us by the Housing Corporation. It is written only in English. The form was given to me but I was not sure how to fill it out. This is a copy coming from my community.

It asks me about my income, the number of people and I do not know exactly what is in there because it is all in English. I do not understand this letter, although it is addressed to me. Is it possible to have it translated into Inuktitut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that it is available in Inuktitut. Maybe the Member is not getting all the correct documentation but I will make a commitment to find it and provide it to the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Oral Questions. Mr. Irqittuq.

Question 394 – 1(6): Processing of Power Bills

Mr. Irqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Minister of the Nunavut Power Corporation.

I was asked to find out about utility rates and the payment centres, which I believe are the Northern Stores and other entities being used as payment centres. I would like to know what the process is to have these bills paid. Some individuals who paid their previous bill have had the same amount charged again on the current invoices.

Usually they are considered as delinquent accounts even though they have made a payment, the Power Corporation then sends them a notice to cut off their power. How can we ensure that there are no improprieties in this process, Mr. Minister? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member's question in this form. Over the last six months maybe, my office has had many phone calls and letters from irate customers concerning the billing of their power bill.

The Member is correct, there has been a delay in the processing of different invoices dealt with by the Power Corporation and indeed, Mr. Speaker, and there is a lag of about thirty to sixty days on their bills.

What the Power Corporation has done, Mr. Speaker, is acknowledge that concern so that for example when you receive your bill today, the meter reading is not for that month. Of course it is for a previous month, it could be up to forty-five days before that date of billing.

There are no notices sent to people to pay their bills within a two month or three month delinquency. What has occurred, Mr. Speaker, is that in each community where we have a Power Corporation Office, or for example in the regional centres we have an Agency Office. They contact the customers to see what the arrears or the delinquency on the account is.

In many cases, Mr. Speaker, when you go to pay your bill, the agency, whether it is Northern Stores, or one of the Corporation's own agency, they give you back to the receipt where you paid. If you fax that to the Agency Office, or demonstrate that to your local Power Corporation Office, then that notification is put on your bill.

The concern has been, Mr. Speaker, that when the bill, as the Member has just said, when it comes out indicating arrears or that even though you have paid the previous month, the bill is still picked up on that. That is because of the delay in the processing that we have out of our office in Baker Lake.

We have changed it around. At one point we were almost ninety days in some regards. It is less than forty-five working days, or business days now. That has been an improvement because of that. We are still not completely there yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Irqittuq.

Mr. Irqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not believe that the Nunavut Power Corporation staff or the Payment Agencies are calling delinquent customers about their bills.

I think today it is more possible to make payments through automatic accounting through the banks or through the computer. Is it possible to make it easier for the customers so that they do not get the late payment notices? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, there are two issues here on the payment. Even if I receive my bill today and went to the Power Corporation Office here in Iqaluit and paid it, there may be a delay in the pick up of the data entry of that payment at the office in Baker Lake.

That was the concern that we have had. It is not necessarily the payment frequency or the schedule, it is not necessarily the bill coming out late, or coming out before. That is the reason why.

What I tried to indicate to the Member was that once you pay your bill, if there is a lag of thirty or sixty days, the Power Corporation itself does not go and say we are going to take your power off.

If you have paid your bill, you have got a returned cheque; you have got a computer readout if you want to do it through the Internet. If you go to an Agency location, for example, Northern and you pay it, they will stamp it and give it back to you. If you present those to the office then that notification is sent in.

It does not mean that it comes right off your bill immediately when you do that, because that is part of the data entry. I hope that that makes it a little bit clearer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Irqittuq.

Mr. Irqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is very easy for you and I because we can send a copy of the payment off to the office, but a lot of people do not have access to a computer, or are not able to use a computer. There are a lot of people out there who do not have fax machines. There are some people who do not know who to turn to.

The reason why I am asking those questions is because we should be able to improve the payment system for the people out there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is the third time that I am asking the same question.

Speaker: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the Member asking the question and again I have indicated that we have cut that timeframe down, at one point it was almost ninety days. There are Members of this House who have brought me their bills and showed them to me where they have not been receiving credit.

So for quality of an answer, an explanation, I can say this. When a person pays their bill, whether it is by cheque, by computer, by cash, or going to the local Store, if you go into Northern and you pay the money, your invoice is stamped right there.

If the copy of a receipt that you receive after you pay and you get that back, you can provide that information to the Power Corporation, whether they be in the smallest community in Nunavut or indeed in the capital or one of the regional centres.

That information can be relayed to the Baker Lake office through your Northern Store or going to the Nunavut Power Corporation office and letting them know. For example, Mr. Speaker, if you are in the Member's community of Hall Beach, before someone would cut off their power, the regional office would phone the operator in Hall Beach and say, can you cut off Ed Picco's power because he has not paid for 90 days.

If they came to my house, Ed Picco would say, excuse me, here are the copies where I have paid, even though they might not show up on the bill. That is the delay in the computer processing that we talked about Mr. Speaker.

I hope that clarifies the question and I hope that in this case, they would not be cutting off my power. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Picco.

>> *Laughter*

Oral Questions. Supplementary. Final supplementary. Mr. Irqittuq.

Mr. Irqittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, with that answer, I can assume then that there is no way of making it easier to register your payments. I guess I will rephrase my question this way. There is absolutely no chance of improving the existing process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, Minister Thompson said there are people waiting and looking forward to my answer. Thank you, Ms. Thompson. I know they are and I am prepared to give them that answer.

Mr. Speaker, I agree with the Member, we will try to improve the system. We have cut the payment lag time down and there are people out there as the Member has indicated. I get emails and letters on a regular basis as some of the Members know.

They bring them to me about concerns with the power billing. Right now, Mr. Speaker, the Power Corporation is meeting right here in Iqaluit, the board of directors. That is something that I will bring to them to see if we can make it better and faster. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Oral Questions. Oral Questions. Mr. Tootoo.

Question 395 – 1(6): Funding Agreement with the Federal Government Regarding Housing Rules

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation.

With his other hat on earlier today, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance talked about the \$60 million dollars that we get from CMHC annually to help defray the costs of operating and maintaining our public housing stocks.

He also indicated that unfortunately over time, these contributions are going to be declining. I believe the first big cut in that funding is this year or next year. So 04/05 or 03/04, the first year of drop in funding was there.

That is something that I have indicated in the past that was not a good agreement to sign into. Also he had indicated that they are looking at a new partnering agreement with the Federal Government saying that it is needed.

I would like to ask the Minister if he could give us any indication as to what kind of agreement that he is looking to take to our federal counterparts in Ottawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, it would be trying to access any type of federal funding through CMHC or the federal Minister responsible that would maximize any opportunities for the Government of Nunavut.

There is a Minister responsible for housing meeting planned for the latter or middle part of April and obviously it will be the first opportunity as a Minister responsible for Housing that I participate on behalf of Nunavut.

We are hoping that we will have some positive dialogue. Again, following up on what the Premier has been successful on, in respect of moving away from a per/capita funding allocation for federal programs, we would be following suit and making those same valid arguments that it is based on needs and costs of operating in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, one of the things that causes a lot of the costs to the Housing Corporation through the Housing Associations and Authority is the way that the utilities and everything are paid by the Corporation and billed to the Associations and the Authority all based on a Government Rate.

We all know that recipients of Income Support pay \$32 for their rent and we know that it costs roughly \$1,700 a month on average to maintain those units. So the Housing basically is subsidizing all of those other areas.

Can the Minister indicate if they are looking at those hidden subsidies so that maybe Housing should just focus on housing because that is all that we can afford? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Member knows in implementing a new rent scale, there was direct involvement with Income Support given that the minimum amount of rent was a part of that overall new Rental Policy.

And there are obviously a lot of utility subsidies that are put forward by the Government and the Housing Corporation in trying to provide those services.

So, it is an area that is being actively worked on. I think, quite frankly, the program review exercise, an initiative that we are undergoing will point out those things and those are some of the things that we will all have an opportunity to review hopefully in the immediate future and to make some recommendations on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate and look forward to seeing and having some input on some of the things that the Minister mentioned in his response.

Another area that is a problem for Housing is the fact that in the previous years, it was the Department of Municipal Affairs and MACA that used to do all of the land developments.

Since then, the Department of Community Government and Transportation and the Government of the Northwest Territories has devolved and dumped that responsibility unto the municipalities who had no choice but to pass on those costs back onto Housing Associations and Housing Corporations indirectly, same with the utilities, the cap and the water /sewer program.

Can the Minister indicate if they will look at making sure any changes like that where things get passed down or devolved to different organizations from other departments that end up taking out of one pocket and putting it into another where that will not adversely affect our housing dollars that we desperately need for housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, that is probably why there has not been the focussed effort probably in beginning with this issue because no matter what you do, if you can reduce costs to the Housing Corporation and free up money for housing, there are additional costs where the municipalities or the Department of Community Government and Transportation to offset those costs one way or another because it is all coming out of the same pocket, the revenues that we generate, the budget allocations that we provide here to this Legislative Assembly.

I think that that is important to recognize that and obviously, we are going to try to maximize efficiencies and I think as I had indicated the program review initiative, well, it does have a detailed inventory.

It will give us an opportunity, all of us in this Legislature an opportunity to see what is there and see if there is any rational and efficient way of moving things around to ensure maximum efficiency of our resources. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Final supplementary. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in his approach to his federal counterparts at CMHC, I was wondering if the Minister is aware that in the past this agreement that we have with CMHC is something that we inherited pretty much from the Northwest Territories. Our former housing Minister in the Nunavut government signed it off and the fact is, that the way we are funded now is based on a block funding agreement.

When the initial plan was put together, it was not a block funding agreement. The whole thing was for every dollar that the government put in for housing, we got seventy-five cents back from the Federal Government.

That is why some of the income support payments are in there. It used to be that for every dollar we put in for income support, we got fifty cents back on the dollar from the Federal Government. I think that is why all those hidden subsidies are in the housing department because we were able to maximize on the input that we got back from the Federal Government.

Will the Minister look at that argument and present that to his federal counterparts, saying that this is the problem that we inherited and that we face? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I will articulate our issues and our needs as far as I am able to.

In respect of an agreement that we inherited, there are all sorts of agreements that we inherited and we have a responsibility to abide by the terms of those agreements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Mr. McLean.

Question 396 – 1(6): Increase of Education Budget for School Operations

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my question today is to the Minister of Finance.

I can probably get this answer in Committee of the Whole on the Department of Education Budget, but in his budget address he said that there was over four million new dollars put into the education budget allocated for school operations.

Can the Minister let us know if this was put in there generally to increase the teachers in the schools? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Minister of Education would be glad to respond to that question once we get into the detailed budget.

I quite frankly do not know the specific details of the allocation. I know it is directly for school operations. The way we develop the budget is we allow all departments the opportunity to have input to their particular sections and that did come from the Department of Education. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister Ng. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. McLean.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It will be a few days before we get into Committee of the Whole so I would like to get the heads up on this money. It is nice to see four million dollars there for operations and I noticed in his budget address he never said anything about new money for new teachers.

Did the Department of Education ask the Minister of Finance when they were doing their budgets, for money for more teachers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Finance, Minister Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, first of all, I did not ask the Minister of Finance and I have said in the past, that it goes to the Financial Management Board and I can not say that all departments and all Ministers in the normal course of business put forth their proposals which are very broad and very costly in respect of their initiatives.

Then the Financial Management Board has the opportunity to review that and in the end recommend an amount or approve an amount for each department. Ministers do have the ability, obviously, to refine those allocations and to formalize the fact through the Financial Management Board and that is the budget process that we see, that regular Members through Standing Committees receive prior to coming to this legislature. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Oral Questions. Mr. Nutarak.

Question 397 – 1(6): Patient Escorts Abusing Alcohol

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. There were some elderly patients who travelled to Ottawa for medical reasons. They are unilingual and have escorts that go along with them when they go to the Hospital. Not all of the patients, but some patients prefer to have an escort. Sometimes their escorts abuse alcohol. I was wondering if the Minister of Health and Social Services is aware of this. Thank you.

Speaker: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, from time to time, incidents do arise or have arisen where escorts who have been sent with medical patients have been found to have been abusing substances that they should not have, or have ignored the patient.

Mr. Speaker, it is not for me as the Minister of Health and the Government to say when and where people should and should not drink. However, if a person is sent as an escort

with a medical patient, we are interested of course, if that person has been drinking or abusing any type of substance; that means that they were not able to take care, or be with the hospital patients.

In those cases, Mr. Speaker, we have, in some cases, documented it and have sent the escort home, and other repercussions have followed when that has occurred. So the answer to the Member's question is yes, I am aware of different instances where escorts have abused substances and/or alcohol, when escorting patients. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister and I know that, and the people of Nunavut know that patients have to go to the hospital down south. Is there anything that the Minister is doing to get rid of this problem? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, when an escort is put in place, we have implemented a new escort policy over a year a half ago to make sure that any person who is unilingual, an elderly person, a younger person, for example, under that age of sixteen, these people would have an escort. That is standard practice across the Territory.

In instances where an escort, whether it be, it does not have to be to the south, for example, Mr. Speaker, the escort could be going to Yellowknife with a patient or indeed the person is going here to Iqaluit with a patient. If we are made aware of a situation where an escort has not carried out their duties as escort, then, Mr. Speaker, that is being made known, not only to the escort but to the patient, then those privileges in many regards in many instances have been taken away.

And Mr. Speaker, before a person is appointed an escort, their duties and roles and responsibilities are explained to them in these cases. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The question that I am asking is more to do with southern medical travel and not to Iqaluit. If I was an elder and I went down to the southern centre for medical treatment and I had an escort and the person who escorted me, if there is booze in the room or whatever, then I get kicked out right away and I get sent home right away.

For that reason he stated that there is a policy being implemented in your department in that regard. What are you going to do with the person who escorts the person who is going on medical travel? Are you going to talk with the nurses about not being able to let the escort be with the patient, and no longer let them escort anyone? Thank you.

Speaker: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. Each instance is a little bit different.

Mr. Speaker, the whole idea of an escort is to help the patient, that is number 1. If we are sending someone to Ottawa or to Winnipeg, to Churchill, to Edmonton, to Yellowknife, to Iqaluit and they are not able to assist the patient because they have been abusing alcohol or other drugs, Mr. Speaker, then they should not be helping the patient, and they should not even be on the trip.

The trip is not a vacation; it is not to provide a shopping experience. Mr. Speaker, the opportunity to take a patient to one of the hospitals is to take care of the patient and assist them.

When someone has abused that privilege, Mr. Speaker, they are informed of that immediately and they have in the past been barred from escorting patients. That is what is occurring.

It is occurring right now. In some cases, Mr. Speaker, someone might have made a mistake. And given the period of time, they may have been barred from escorting a patient. If a patient requests using that escort again, that request may be turned down because of the problems that we have had with the patient escort. So that is what occurs, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Final supplementary. Mr. Nutarak.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker for allowing me to ask my final supplementary.

I am not talking about all the patients who go down south, who have an escort and if the escort doesn't do well, then you could just send them home. Perhaps the Minister could do more so that the money is used effectively.

Say, for instance if the individual who escorted me is no longer there because of what they did, and I would be by myself as an elder, I wonder if the Minister could make it a little stricter so that the individuals are not allowed to escort anybody if they had caused any problems. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the Member that if a person is asked to do an escort, and that is usually the way that it occurs, Mr. Speaker, if the person is in Pond Inlet, in the Member's community and has to take a

patient and escort him to Ottawa, then usually the patient would request, if I could use my niece, my daughter or my son-in-law, whoever that person is.

Once that name comes forward and they say, I want to use Ed as my escort, the nursing station would say, we have had a problem with Ed in the past and therefore Ed cannot be the escort.

They would be barred from being the escort. So, we can look at, Mr. Speaker, as the Member has suggested as a way of strengthening, tightening, regulating and barring as it were, people who have abused the role of escorts so that they would not be able to escort a patient again if that is the case.

That is something that we could look at and take it under advisement to the Member and to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Question 398 – 1(6): Power Bill Payments

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just have a short question to the Minister of the Nunavut Power Corporation.

There have been some problems in my community with the payment agencies. Because the Nunavut Power Corporation is located in Baker Lake, my community has encountered some problems in paying their bills at payment agencies; they have had problems with the payment agencies.

There used to be one location where you could go and pay your bill, but there is more than one now. Can you look into that to see whether there is only one payment agency or more? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. What we have actually tried to do to speed up, make it easier for the people to make their payments, in some locations they are actually set up by Customer Service Agencies to make it available to customers to pay their bills.

For example, in some communities with the Northern, or the Co-op, you can go in there and pay your power bill and you can go in there and they record the payments and send it in to their regional office which then processes it for Baker Lake. Or as the Member has said, you can mail it yourself. So, that is some of the ways we are trying to expedite it and speed it up.

I know in the Member's community we have had some people contact us on the way the bills have been presented and most recently, there has been acknowledgement of some of

the positive results of the bill payments from the community the Member represents.
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is mostly the elders who are given a hard time because they do not understand the procedure. There is one individual who was billed for \$2,000 because they could not find the receipt that he paid.

Perhaps there could be a better system or procedure where those payment agencies are taught the proper procedure and there has been a lot of fraud of the ordinary people from those payment agencies who use cash.

There has to be a better system whereby they are given a receipt or an assurance that they have already paid their bill and that they are not asked to pay the same bill again. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in actuality with the bill that you receive when you take the bill and I will just use Northern for sake of the explanation, when you take your bills to Northern and you pay your \$60, the clerk at the Northern will stamp the bill with a NPC stamp. They will keep a copy of the bill for their receipt and they will give you back a receipt.

In actuality, Mr. Speaker, there are always two copies of the bill. Now, at some time, Mr. Speaker, we do little invoices when that occurs Mr. Speaker, the payment itself will still be registered by the agency because they would be recording this and receive the money for the payments. It may take a little longer, but they will be able to find that payment.

I think in the case that the Member is talking about, eventually, that is what occurred. The Member is correct. We need to be able to expedite that or speed up the acknowledgement process of the payment, especially for the elderly people who may not have the same ability when it comes to the payments of the bill as well as the expedience that we are talking about. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Supplementary. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Mr. Iqaqrialu (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought I was going to ask a short question. The Northern Stores have their headquarters in Winnipeg. That is probably one of the reasons why the payment to those Power Corporations are delayed because of the rules that they have with their headquarters in Winnipeg.

Have you looked into something like that that such payment agencies could make sure that the payments that they receive from the public are done in a more expeditious manner? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker that is the confusion with the payment system that is in place. In one case, Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to be in one of the communities and it was during a public meeting they were having.

In that public meeting, one of the constituents was there and pointed out their bill very angrily. They said, look at how much money I owe and so on and so forth. What happened is they thought for example, that Northern in this case, Northern does a very good job in actually facilitating the payments.

The payments don't go to Winnipeg or anything like that. What occurs, Mr. Speaker and if I can, for point of illustration for this very important topic, is that when you go in and pay your bill, Northern records that David Iqaqrialu, has paid \$60 dollars.

At the end of the week, usually on a weekly basis, let's say on Tuesday, David paid. On Friday, Northern would look through their payment schedule and they say, here is who has paid their bills in Clyde River for Nunavut Power Corporation. They would take the invoice and fax it down to the regional office and then that would be sent over to Baker Lake and the payments would be recorded as such.

Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct; there may be a way to expedite that situation. Is there an opportunity for example, Mr. Speaker, to expedite the payment directly from Clyde to the office in Baker Lake from the agency, and that is something that we are looking at. I will bring some of these concerns up to the CEO of the Power Corporation and the board that are right now meeting in Iqaluit over the next couple of days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. The Members will note that question period is now over. Moving on to Item 8. Written Questions. Item 9. Returns to Written Questions. Item 10. Replies to Opening Address. Item 11. Replies to Budget Address. Item 12. Petitions. Item 13. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Item 14. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills. Item 15. Tabling of Documents. Item 16. Notices of Motions. Item 17. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Mr. Ng.

Item 17: Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills

Bill 30 – Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act 2003/2004 - Notice

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, March 13, I will move that Bill 30, Appropriations (Operations and Maintenance) Act 2003/2004 be read for the first time.

And Mr. Speaker, later on today, I will be asking for consent to deal with this first reading today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Item 17. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 18. Motions. Item 19. First Reading of Bills. Mr. Ng.

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek consent to waive the two day notice requirement to allow for first reading of Bill 30, the Appropriation Act 2003/2004. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. The Minister is seeking consent to waive rule 62 (1), so that the bill can have first reading today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed. Mr. Ng.

Item 19: First Reading of Bills

Bill 30 – Appropriations (Operations and Maintenance) Act 2003/2004 – First Reading

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Members, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Baffin South that Bill 30, Appropriations (Operations and Maintenance) Act 2003/2004, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 30 has had first reading. Item 19. First Reading of Bills. Item 20. Second Reading of Bills. Mr. Ng.

Item 20: Second Reading of Bills

Bill 30 – Appropriations (Operations and Maintenance) Act 2003/2004 – Second Reading

Hon. Kelvin Ng: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Baffin South that Bill 30, Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act 2003/2004 be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Bill is to seek Legislative approval, for the Operations and Maintenance requirements for the Government of Nunavut's Departments in the amount of \$699 million 970 thousand to allows for the delivery of programs and services effective April 1st 2003.

Mr. Speaker, as well, attached to the Bill of the Business Plans of all of the Departments of the Government of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. The Motion is in order. To the principle of the Bill. Question has been called. All of those in favour. All of those opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 30 has had Second Reading and accordingly the Bill stands referred to a Committee. Item 20. Second Reading of Bills. Item 21.

Before we proceed with Committee of the Whole, I would like to read the following message that comes from the Commissioner of Nunavut, Mr. Irniq.

And it reads: I wish to advise and recommend to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut the passage of the following Bills on the 6th Session of the First Legislative Assembly in Nunavut:

Bill 30: Appropriation, Operation and Maintenance, 2003-2004.

Bill 31: Supplementary Appropriation Act, #3, 2002-2003.

Bill 32: Supplementary Appropriation, Operations and Maintenance, #2, 2002-2003.

Signed by Commissioner, Peter Irniq.

Consideration of the Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters, Bill 22, Bill 23, Bill 30, Minister Statement 95-1(6), Tabled Document 30-1(6) with Mr. Iqaqrialu in the Chair and also on Bills, Bill 24.

Before we go to Committee of the Whole, we will take a ten-minute break.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 16:28 p.m. and resumed at 16:47 p.m.*

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. We will continue on with the issue that we did not complete the last time we were under Committee of the Whole.

So I would like to ask the Minister if he's ready to go down to the witness table with his officials. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, yes, I would be very pleased to go to the witness table with some of the presenters that we have here this afternoon and staff. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Picco. Does the Committee agree that he identify his officials? Sergeant-at-arms.

Thank you, Minister Picco, if you could introduce your officials. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with me today, on my immediate left is Mr. Andrew Tagak Sr., the specialist with Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit within the Department of Health and Social Services.

On my immediate right is Acting Deputy Minister of Health and Social Services for the Government of Nunavut, Dr. Keith Best. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. We will deal with Minister's Statement 95-1(6) and we will continue on with that, mental health and suicide prevention. We will just go on with that Tabled Document 30-1(6).

The Members can make their general comments. Since some Members were late coming to this session due to bad weather, I am glad that they have been able to make it here before we complete this item.

So therefore I will allow them to speak first. For those Members who did not have the opportunity to make their general comments, this is a very important issue, on suicide prevention and mental health. This is a very important matter.

We are still on general comments with those who did not make their general comments for ten minutes. So, we will get back to general comments for ten minutes since we stopped there. Mr. Puqiqnak.

Mr. Puqiqnak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A few days ago, we dealt with mental health and suicide prevention and I am very glad that we are able to speak to this issue during the Committee of the Whole.

Although we know that we spoke about this issue through Members' Statements and through Oral Questions to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services and they have been asking how they can eradicate or reduce the number of suicides.

We have heard that although we don't seem to be moving forward by deliberating on this issue, this is a very heavy issue and we all want to eradicate suicide but we have to start talking about this problem because we should not give up on some of the things if they don't resolve right away.

I believe that the Government of Nunavut can look and focus mainly on the reduction on the number of suicides. I know it is very difficult to eradicate it. I believe that as the Nunavut Government, we can help give support to problems within our community. For that reason, a few days ago, when I was acting Speaker, I was unable to speak to this issue.

I would watch the proceedings and watched the proceedings during Committee of the Whole when they deliberated on suicide prevention and just watching it, I know it is very hard to deal with and it makes you emotional. And when you want to speak to this issue further, you cannot find the words to describe it.

So, therefore, I am very appreciative of the fact that we can deal with this heavy issue on suicide. Yes, we need to reduce the number of suicides by deliberating with each other.

Before the creation of the Nunavut Government, traditionally we used to live in the outpost camps when I was a child, we were taught survival and how to want to live. They taught us all how to survive, how to not expose yourself and they taught us how not to get our kamiks wet. Our parents worked very hard to teach us how to survive because they wanted us to remain alive.

But today, it is clearly different now, it seems like the young people out there have many different things that could interfere with their lives because we see things that were not around when I was younger.

For that reason, their parents are leaving behind the young people and at times, their parents break up even though the young couple have children on their own. So, they go through hard times. I know that it must be hard on the young person who becomes orphaned. And I know that this is a heavy issue to carry as a young person.

We used to have many plans in Nunavut and there are other opportunities out there still, opportunities out there that can help us and have those programs effective and be supportive in all of the three Regions.

There is a Baffin Regional Correctional Center in the Baffin Region and we do not have correctional centers in other Regions, even though the inmates go to correctional centers to get help.

They leave their family behind when they are incarcerated and their families cannot even go to see the inmates because they cannot afford to go visit their relatives who are incarcerated.

So, these are some of the hardships that people have to go through and we have seen, for example, there were a couple of Kitikmeot Inmates who were housed here in the Baffin Correctional Center when they should be incarcerated in the Kitikmeot Region and they had committed suicide at the Correctional Center here and that is just one of the examples I could use.

That is why we have to work to reduce the number of suicides. We have to find solutions and it is evident that we need to find solutions. At that time during the fall, I went through hard times as a parent and as a father.

All of my family members thought that we had lost one of our children. But he survived the attempt and we try to give him full support and are really happy and glad that he's alive today.

I do want to pave the road of the future for our young people. I know that it is very difficult to deal with and hard and difficult when you experience it. Yes, we will have to find some sort of solution to this problem.

We are just at the initial stages of where we are looking for solutions by deliberating with each other. We want to eradicate and reduce the number suicides because we have seen our lives being denigrated and we want to expect to overcome those. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Puqiqnak. I will give Mr. Alakannuark an opportunity to make his general comments.

Mr. Alakannuark (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank you all that I am able to participate in these discussions.

I don't know how I can just support or help on this issue but it is about time that we take a stand against suicide. We have been talking about it for a long time and usually what happens is we have a discussion on the issue of suicide and suicide prevention but we don't have an action plan; we don't have a strategy.

I think every single individual has been affected by suicide. It has been a heavy burden on all the individuals over here. What can we do to resolve this issue? What can we do to give support and help to our youth out there? How do we get the message to the young people that survival is a basic instinct that we should go by?

We used to be young before but we got the help of our parents who gave us the foundation that we can go on. What can we do for the young people of Nunavut? It is up to us; we should take the initiative to help and support the people of Nunavut.

There are suicides committed in very short time spans and when you hear about suicide from the other Nunavut communities, everybody is affected and hurt by it.

You feel for the parents of that child, for the relatives and for the whole community in general. I have gone through this myself personally and you come to the point where you feel so helpless and you don't know whether you'll be able to go on or not.

You might have many children or grandchildren at that point and you have many questions where you ask whether you'll be able to go on or what you can do. But of course, we have all gone through this and we have been able to go passed that hurdle.

That is why we are still standing today. If that is the case, it is up to us. We are working hard but we have to have some kind of a plan that we can implement. Some kind of a strategy, some kind of action formed.

There are many survivors out there, whether they are male or female who have questions, who have broken hearts, who do not know whether it is better for them to keep going or not.

I am sure they think that they feel guilt or accusations from the rest of the community members. We feel for those individuals, we love them as their life is precious. Their life is precious to us and at times the survivors' lives seem to disintegrate afterwards.

After a suicide, after their immediate family member committed suicide, I think that is why there is such a large of number of completed suicides.

It is up to us now to help them out and if we do not do anything, the numbers are going to keep increasing and the frequency is going up.

If that is the case, I am speaking from the heart and it hurts, it is painful and I am smiling and I see other people smiling, but they are hurting inside. There is not one individual who is not feeling pain when we are talking about the issue of suicide.

It is up to us as a Government to help, to slow down or to decrease the number of completed suicides. Each individual community can take a stand against suicide, the elders and the mental health workers, for example.

They have two different concepts of counselling that they use. They are the counsellors for helping, the professionals are helping to the best of their ability and they counsel all of the people in need.

But in the traditional fashion, the elders can show compassion to the individual, real compassion, the real feeling of wanting to help. So, there is a slight difference there and I think that the best way to combat suicide is to start at the grass roots.

We might talk about it until we are blue in the face, but it is not going to do anything. It is not going to go anywhere. The communities have to start combating the issue of suicide and put some kind of action plan to work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alakannuark. Mr. Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a few comments on this issue. I will try to be as clear as possible because I did not have an opportunity to make my general comments.

Suicide is now very evident in Nunavut and we have to look at solutions or action plans in order to combat the issue. We have no other alternative now but to take the initiative and to look at what we can do to help the youth and the people of Nunavummiut and where we can work together when we are working on the issue of suicide.

This morning I was sitting with two of my colleagues and we discussed the issue of suicide and what we can do about it as Members.

We had a discussion and it is very evident that it is the hardship that is being experienced by many people in Nunavut. There have been attempted suicides and there are survivors out there. Not very many but there are people who attempted but did not complete their suicides.

The counsellors and the professionals know them as suicidal but they attempt again. We have to look at the long term and talk to the survivors, or the people who attempted suicide.

They can discuss what made them attempt suicide, and what they experienced. If we hear from the survivors we can look for solutions there, and the counsellors and the professionals can also change the way to do counselling so that it would be conformed to meet the needs of the survivors.

As you probably already know, there will be a conference here in Iqaluit and there will be many participants and keynote speakers who will be involved there. What we have discussed last week and this week, the information that is compiled on these discussions could be given to the conference participants.

We have been discussing this issue for two days. We can very strongly word the comments that were made in this room and give a copy to conference participants. We can work closely together with the conference organizers to see what we can do for the issue of suicide prevention.

I know that it is going to take years to work on all those issues. It is now very evident that we now have no alternative but to combat this issue. We have been working on it for a long time and we will be working on it for a long time in the future.

We will have to work together with the communities and bring awareness out there at the grass roots level. We have a lot of work to do ahead of us. And also in having casual conversations, as we did this morning, we know that it is evident that it is a concern and that there is a lot of people who would like to make comments on the issue of suicide.

We have to talk to the survivors, we have to talk to the suicide prevention coordinators, and we have to talk to the stakeholders in order to come out with an action plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Akesuk. I will now give Mr. McLean an opportunity.

Mr. McLean: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I want to make it very clear to Minister Picco and his staff that I personally do not look at him to solve this problem. It is an epidemic and most epidemics can be stopped with medications, and flu shots, and stuff like that. This is an issue that cannot be stopped by the Department of Health alone.

It is a global issue in Nunavut. And I say epidemic in the way that it is happening, in the amount of it that is happening. The sad statistic today, is that our children, all of us in this assembly have children and grandchildren, and their odds of committing suicide are eight times higher than anywhere else in Canada. To me that is a tragedy. Why are our young people taking their lives? Why are they eight times more prone to take their lives? Why are they three times more likely to attempt?

That is a global issue that is just not the one community. Is the issue, are young people trying to take their lives and trying to commit suicide because of poverty? I don't know. That could be an issue.

Are they attempting this and taking their lives because they see no future ahead of them? Is that an issue? Are they attempting to do this because, they look out their door or their window, or something like that and they have low self-esteem and they don't see anything happening to their lives in the future?

You look around our communities, I still say that Nunavut is probably one of the most beautiful places in the world to live, not that I have been around the world that much. But I've travelled Canada and parts of North America and Greenland and I still say that Nunavut offers more things than living in Toronto and beating traffic and the concrete jungle.

We have an abundance of opportunities to go out fishing and hunting and living on beautiful land and stuff like that. Has that been lost to the youth? We talk about culture in the schools. Are young people proud of their culture? I don't know.

When people, especially young people start taking their lives and giving up at that young age, it happens everywhere in the world. But, the statistics that show that our children and grandchildren up here are eight times more likely to take their lives and two or three times more likely to attempt to take their lives, is a foreign state in a country that is supposed to boast the second and third best living standards in the world.

Well, hello out there, Canada and the Federal Government that is not happening up here. I know we are not even on the map with the Federal Government when it comes to other issues.

It really frustrates me when I hear we have the best country in the world. I am a Canadian. I am a southern Canadian who moved into the north. I am proud of Canada, but when we get statistics like this, what are we doing? We talk about it. I want to reiterate, I don't blame the Department of Health and Social Services in Nunavut. I don't blame anybody. This is a corruptive epidemic affecting every community and family in Nunavut.

And yes, I was told not to talk about it. We were all told not to talk about it. Until we start talking about it and getting together as a territory and as a Canadian Government assisting us somehow and if they can't assist us, maybe it is time to go to somebody else to ask for help.

Maybe it is time to go to the United States. Maybe it is time to go to Europe and say, you know, what are we doing? Can you help us because it certainly shows that the Federal Government are not helping us alleviate a situation that is horrendous. If this happened in any community in southern Canada, there would be more people running around trying to find out why and trying to stop it.

Why? Is it the old stereotypical view? I don't know. But I am tired of it and I am going to start talking more about it, the longer I live up here. It has got to stop. I think collectively, with the help from outside agencies, and I think it is time. I am not so proud or not so big to ask somebody from someplace else in the world to come and help us.

If our Federal Government is going to sit back and ignore us when it comes to the issue of suicide, well let us do something about it. And it starts at the community level. But we have got to give the communities the resources at the community level to deal with it. I don't blame this government. I don't.

It is not something that just popped up in the last five or six years; it has been going on for years, and years. When you only live up here for a few years of your life from the south, and you move down south, it is easy to ignore a situation. But, when you live up here and it happens to affect our families, our friends, and everything else, then it is time to start saying to the Federal Government, there are billions and billions of dollars in surpluses, they are bragging about how they are going to spend it.

They ought to come up here and help us with the situation that is horrendous, I am the first one to stand up in the Legislative Assembly to ask some other country to come in to help us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. McLean. Minister Kilabuk.

Hon. Peter Kilabuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The comment made by my colleague and I support him wholeheartedly on his comments. The government, counsellors, church groups who are in the helping profession and young people who are helping their peers need someone to listen to them. There are young people who are there to help their peers, but I wanted to comment on the issue of suicide.

Although I was not here the other day when you were talking about this, I will make this brief. What I have to say is that I have a suggestion that might help in the suicide issue, but I am not going to talk about suicide in a manner that I feel will be uncomfortable for you.

I have gone through a suicide ordeal in my family within the last couple of years. It has been a long struggle and it has been hard for us. It was quite a little while that I had someone who committed suicide.

I wanted to make sure that as I work with this Legislature that I talk about suicide. I know for a fact that we have to try to find out why people commit suicide. I also believe and also feel that we have to start talking about suicide and not put people down.

We should stop putting down counsellors, elders, young people, because I know that not only young people commit suicide. I, myself, have had a family member who was an older person, who committed suicide. Anyone can go through hardships and helplessness.

I wanted to speak because as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, the problems, the stress, the crisis and the hurt a person is going through, whether they are a young person, an elder or older person. Everyone has gone through it, and everyone has gone through these crisis situations and helplessness. It too passes.

My colleagues, Members of the Legislative Assembly, and helping professions and other agencies, we have to start working together and talk about suicide and make sure that we take down the barriers where suicide is concerned.

A lot of the times when we are going through bereavement and there has been a suicide, we feel that we are the only ones who have gone through it, but that is not the case. Others have gone through it. We have to make sure we let people know that other people have gone through the same thing where suicide is concerned. And there is help for them.

Like I say, Mr. Chairman, I told the Legislature that I was going to make this brief. I can only talk about the experience that I have gone through and because of the experience I had.

I have come to realize that what I have been advised about previously when I was younger and I have been advised that all the things that an individual has gone through have been experienced by others and it will be the same again in the future for others. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Kilabuk. All of the Members of the Legislative Assembly had a chance to make general comments on suicide prevention. I will give the Members a chance to speak again, if Members would like to make additional comments on the issue.

Like I stated at the last meeting that we had, suicide is a very important issue. We need to start doing something about solving the suicide problem. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think there are two things that we are talking about right now, something to alleviate the problem at the present time, and the other one, I know that we cannot resolve this at the present time.

What plans or action plans are we going to set to make goals and objectives to make sure that my children and my grandchildren will strive to live? And how do we prevent suicide?

These are the two things that we are talking about. One that is the immediate problem: how do we deal with the immediate problem? And also, what kind of goals and objectives are we going to set to combat suicide?

And when I am looking at my two adopted children and there are two things I notice that they do. There is the TV, there are always programs on TV about war all of the time. There are movies depicting violence, war and there are games that depict war and they are shooting at each other.

And although they had a game like that, there are some kids that were visiting him using those G.I. Joe weapons and they started playing with those G.I. Joe weapons. I told them right away; do not point that gun at an individual.

And the other two children who visited my children started looking at me very strangely, how come he does not want me to play guns? How come he is getting mad just because we are playing with guns, playing G.I. Joe?

And my kids told them, quoting me, do not shoot people, only shoot animals.

Mr. McLean and I have been from down south, I went to school down south, and I have studied how southern culture started in our country from England. This department or the industrial age has started from the English.

Western culture is always looking for ways to improve society. We are using electricity and everything that makes an individual feel more comfortable and we even have thermostats in the house to make us more comfortable.

We have packaged foods, ready to heat up food. And insurance and medical insurance, that are there to make every individual comfortable in life. And we are teaching our

children that. We are teaching them on how to be more comfortable and have more and better and safer surroundings.

Even us, we have skidoos to go and hunt for food. We even have vehicles and drive from here just to over there, a few minutes away. We even drive to work by vehicle from home, which won't even take an hour to walk.

What I am trying to say, Mr. Chairman, is that I am going to be asking questions. Sometimes, we give out five dollars to people who beg for money. A lot of times, people give up things that are so minimal and feel helpless because, perhaps in their past, they went through a very traumatic experience or have gone through grief or abuse of some kind at home.

Perhaps they commit suicide because they look back to that certain point where they remember things. I used to go to Nunavut Arctic College to school. I studied the life skills program.

I tried to work through things that I have experienced where I've gone through hard times and it seems impossible at times, but I tried my best to get through it. I did my best because that is my goal that is how I learned life skills.

I am not ashamed to talk about talking about this to young people. Sometimes people have no idea on how to survive; as soon as they have no more money, they are kicked out of their home or their parents pass away.

Also they feel less loved if you direct your attention at another child, they feel abandoned. We know for a fact that suicide is not the answer. I myself as I stated earlier, if you are trying to survive, sometimes it is hard to think about suicide.

I myself, am totally scared of death, of causing death except to animals. That is what we are not teaching our children. We are not blaming anyone. We are not blaming any individual. But we have forgotten how to parent our children.

We are at a point where we are living in an environment where we see today only and we don't see the future or their future. My father started teaching me about life and I've learned how to cope and look at my children, my adopted children, and I want to be able to be a good parent to them.

Some of us do not wish to scold or discipline them because we tend to love them so much. Perhaps this is because of what we watch on TV or what we learned at school as the majority of the time our parents never taught us that style of child rearing.

We are overprotective of our children, although our parents never did that because they disciplined us by traditional methods and this included unconditional love. I have a multitude of comments or suggestions to make, but too little time as there are a lot of things that we could discuss on this issue.

Perhaps I could ask the Minister, have you developed any plans to use Inuit methods, not social services, not a mental health specialist, nothing that the administration considers professional but in the traditional specialist area or with people who have attempted suicide? Have you talked with families who have lost family members to suicide?

Have you talked to any organizations able to collect information or conduct research on suicidal phases and families who have suffered at its hands? Have you collected information on why these young people are committing suicide? Why they tried to commit suicide and we should be trying to meet this challenge because it is only when we know the reasons that we can deal with it.

There are inquiries at times when someone does that in a public environment. Has the department ever thought about doing research into why people attempt suicide and have you tried to get information from those who have experienced this aspect of life? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Minister Picco is presently busy, so I do not know if he heard you. I will ask him directly. Mr. Picco, can you comment on the questions posed by the Member?

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, first of all, since the first day of the discussions and comments on the issue of suicide, we have heard some excellent comments across the floor from all the Members.

I did want an opportunity at some point to respond to some of the comments that we have heard and get into some of the specific questions and throw some questions out for the Members.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. McLean said it earlier and Mr. Arvaluk has talked about it, Mr. Puqiqnak has mentioned it. The issue of suicide did not begin on April 1, 1999, since Nunavut started.

It has been going on for years. But there are some questions that we could look at as a department and as a government to see how we could refocus our resources on those. So, for example, Mr. Chairman, I want to throw out a couple of questions and get some discussion on these issues.

Why is it Mr. Chairman, that some communities have not experienced any suicides? Since April 1, 1999, we have some communities that there have been zero suicides. We have some other communities, Mr. Chairman, not just communities of 200 or 500 people, some communities that are some of the largest in Nunavut where there has not been one suicide.

In other communities, Mr. Chairman, from the smallest to the largest, we have had a lot of suicides. Why is that? Is there something in those communities that is lacking or that is working that is preventing suicide?

I told you a couple of years ago, Mr. Chairman, a question in the House, when we talked about our little health committees that we set up. In one community in Nunavut, we have had the worst episodes of suicides by numbers, right up before April 1, 1999.

That community put a small health committee in place and they have had no suicides since April 1, 1999 and they have had only one suicide since 1998. So, something that community is doing is working.

Is that something that we can do, not only as a government but also as communities all across Nunavut? That is a question. When I look the statistics too Mr. Chairman, I want to make something else very clear. For every successful suicide, there are five attempts.

For every attempt, there is an equal or more number of people who did not complete a suicide attempt because they were counselled against it.

Right now, Mr. Chairman, after our debate last week on this issue, I had calls, faxes, emails to my Office, people came to see me saying: What about all of the good work that is happening in communities; will that help people not even attempt suicide?

Church groups, youth counselling groups, peer groups and the work that people are actually doing out there like mental health workers, drug and alcohol workers, social workers, are actually counselling people every single day.

For every successful suicide you hear about, there are five that do not even happen because someone has been helping them.

So, I want to make sure that we act now with that in the House. We know people out there are helping, but maybe some of the questions we could say is, you know, look at the number of communities, why are some communities not experiencing suicide? And how do we help those people who just put programs in place?

I disagree with Mr. McLean and the Federal Government. I do not think that we should have some Federal Government ask the United States for help. I do not think it is a government-wide issue. I think we have to start it right off in families and in the communities. And I can go through a list of things the government has done the last three years.

We have put 17 new psychiatric nurse positions in place, we have hired new mental health workers, we put alcohol and drug councils in, and we have opened psychiatric facilities.

I can go on, Mr. Chairman, I know that we need to talk about it and the Member was saying that this is a serious issue. So, all I am saying is, you want to me to stop and I will. All I am saying is: What are some of the things that we have already done?

I know we are not doing enough, but maybe the opportunity here, Mr. Chairman, is to look at communities where there have been no suicides, because something is working there, with families and working with other issues in those communities with health groups and so on.

Maybe that is something that we can also think of. Take the successes, because there have been successes in the last three years and we need to be able to talk about that and we need to be able to talk about the good work that has happened with counsellors, with some of the work that is going on like the Crisis Line.

And I also want to point out one last thing, Mr. Chairman. Next week there will be another conference going on about suicide here in Nunavut. We are polling some of the Members who have talked about it.

People from across the world, we are having people coming in from Australia, where the Aboriginal population in Australia also experience very high rates of suicides. We are having people from Greenland here to talk about suicide and they are all doctors and psychiatrists and those kinds of people.

After that conference in May, we will be having our own Nunavut conference and then the National conference, but I think it goes back to talking about the issue and seeing how we could, as a government and as Members, can address the issue.

As Mr. Arvaluk said there is no easy solution or answer; if there was, we would all have it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Like I said earlier on, that I was going to allow some Members to talk again who have already spoken just to make sure that everybody gets their say.

I just wanted to ask Members if they would like to speak again on the topic. If you have any more questions or comments. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk: I think you were right by asking the Minister, whether he understood me or not. I guess he did not. I simply asked, Mr. Chairman, I want to ask again, but I thought I made the comment, hearing myself few seconds so that I could ask further, my statements.

My simple question was: Do you have statistics as to why individuals, how the individual lived before committing suicide or attempting suicide?

Is it the family, is it the person, is it the grandfather, etc. etc. Do you have that? I guess the simple question is, yes or no.

The second question is, will you set up some kind of committee or commission or group or whatever you want to call it on suicide prevention and make recommendations on an action plan for the government and the communities, not made up of experts from Toronto, but of the survivors, by the survivors of the suicide attempts and respected community front line workers on suicide prevention.

They might not have the answers, but at least they will give us information as to why, on average some of these young people try to commit suicide or are successful in committing suicide. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Just a short response from the Minister would be adequate so that there can be more questions from the Members. Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I understood the question the first time. I thought I was given the opportunity to respond to all the things that we have heard.

I thought that is what we usually do in the committee. So I was going to respond back to the Member and Mr. Arvaluk is correct. We do have the statistics and the review and I had said in my Member's Statement, which the Members have tabled here.

I was just looking at it again just now, since 1999, we do an immediate review of all suicides and I had said in the statement, in questions in the House a couple of months ago, Mr. Tagak, is one of them right here next to me.

We have two people within the department and another person in the Keewatin, starting on April 1st, where we are actually going and looking at exactly what James talked about earlier. What is the family background? How old were they? Are there supports needed? Were they put in place? I guess that is exactly what Mr. Arvaluk had been asking for.

So, that is in place. I don't know if Mr. Best or Andrew would like to add anything to that short answer but I am trying to keep my answer brief as you requested, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Picco for the response to Mr. Arvaluk's question. At this time I have Mr. Irgittuq.

Mr. Irgittuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is not a very easy subject because we live a very different lifestyle today.

We are all new to the lifestyle of today. It is not like the one the person sitting next to me, Mr. Alakannuark, had earlier in his life. That is why he's sitting with us in this House.

I think we are in an unbearably difficult situation, especially the young people who are in a very hard situation. Maybe because we are spoiled, or maybe our parents got spoiled and in turn spoiled us.

At that time, years ago, some people didn't have anything. Today there were some comments made that years ago, the dogs were slaughtered because they wanted to force us into a new lifestyle.

Today it seems that there are more suicides compared from that our previous lifestyle. Even though there is suicide, I think that if the numbers go down that it would greatly improve.

There are already two suicides that occur every month in Nunavut sometimes more. What we have to do is create a commission and like Mr. Alakannuark said, we have to do our work. We have to try to prevent suicide in our communities, but we also need to conduct studies into the reasons.

As the Minister stated, they have the statistics of the previous lifestyles of people who succeeded in committing suicide. I think that we have to do a study more vigorously which should be some commission or a body of people to help each community.

Perhaps we can start by asking very personal questions about the lost one, and if the parents agreed with the concept, then questions about the circumstances, the mental stress or anguish, the factors related to their attempt if they do not mind answering them.

With your parents, ask everything about how they started off with their married lives, what their parents wanted from them? How did you feel when your parents died? Were you put in a separate room when your parents were buried?

Those are the types of traditions we have that is bothering the people that commit suicide. I cannot point my finger at who is at fault. I cannot blame my parents. Maybe they had problems deep inside them, in the lifestyle they were raised in and how they were raised that in turn, affects us in raising our children? And our children end up committing suicide.

For instance, if they were not happy growing up, they want their children to live a better life than theirs. For the older people out there who grew up in the traditional lifestyle, they are becoming frightened by their children's habits and antics.

When we got into settlements, our parents were living in luxurious conditions compared to the olden days and they basically started to spoil us. They could afford to lavish gifts of affection without fear of starvation. This has destroyed a lot of people.

I have some questions later on, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to state again that our young children today have too much now. It seems like they have no rules for them to follow at all. They do not get any discipline from their parents anymore.

I do not really want to talk about religion, but our parents taught us about the bible when we were younger. There is no religion in the homes anymore. Not all the homes but the majority of the homes have no religious background anymore.

It has been said that we are living in a very stressful and difficult life, but we have to teach them about Jesus, that there is God, and there is also Satan. We have to teach our children that. There is no belief in religion in the homes. We have a small Church in our community and it has never been full. There is a fairly large population in my community, but only the elders attend Church the majority of the time and there is a clear age distinction.

That is the teachings we were taught and here are the children sleeping and when they wake up, they just go and play hockey on the streets. They don't think about going to church.

I think this is the kind of teaching that we have to start with our children now. What I want to see, Mr. Chairman, is to have some interviews with all the families of the people who committed suicide to find out what kind of lifestyle that they had because we can use that information from the parents to try to resolve this critical issue.

Some of the people who have tried to commit suicide have never been asked to make a testimony. There are people in my hometown who know about trying to commit suicide and survived.

Sometimes they go into the church and they give a testimony about what happened to them and the preachers just say it is the way he was supposed to live, just to make the parents feel better.

Some young people say after trying to commit suicide, after that when they go to church, they will say they was supposed to try this and survived somehow. They were supposed to try to commit suicide and survived just to make others feel good.

The preachers, there is a reading in the bible that talks about that type of issue. Something to do with the figures in the bible, the people in the bible who committed suicide and survived. They talk about having a near death experience and stuff like that.

Nobody knows that they are going to be in a better position if they attempt suicide. Nobody knows that. My brothers and sisters told me, they were trying to comfort me, but it wasn't really comforting because they didn't know where my brother went to or my other relatives that committed suicide.

For all we know, maybe they went to eternal fire. What happened a year ago with my parents is that they tried very hard to survive. It was very hard for them. They were too scared of death to even think about suicide. Those are the types of things that I wanted to talk about.

I feel the Department of Health and Social Services should produce or start something whereby the surviving parents are interviewed and the siblings are interviewed as to the life of the individual who committed suicide just to find out what kind of lifestyle they had.

I am not talking about those experts from down south. I am talking about the surviving siblings and the parents. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sorry I have a cold, I tend to cough when I try to speak. As the Minister stated that the Federal Government may not be able to help but I don't agree with him.

In this 200-page document, there is a Canada-wide council that deals with this issue. Can the Minister can say who participated? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): My apologies, but it is 6 o'clock. I would like to move to extend the session for one hour until 7 o'clock. As we know, we are not going to come up with an action plan here, but it is just in support in dealing with the situation.

Chairperson (interpretation): There is a motion to extend the sitting hours to continue this Item until 7 o'clock? Jobie?

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): I second the Motion.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. All in favour? Okay. We will extend the sitting hours an hour. I will just go back to Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I was saying, I did not agree with the comments that the Minister made about not asking the Federal Government for assistance. There is an eight member Council with the First Nations participants that are Canada-wide. There is some mention of Inuit in the report.

My apologies, I would like to acknowledge the Minister for his support in the communities. I also had to assist one of the communities just the other day where these communities have these people in the communities who do not have formalized training to be counsellors, but are willing to give time to help in the communities on this issue.

I would like to ask why the Federal Government is not assisting us on this very critical matter. Why are there good services for the First Nations people that do not seem to apply to us? And there is this program where you can apply for funding and there is all of these experts in this field that are trying to deal with the matter.

So, I would like to ask, Mr. Chairman, the Minister as to whether we have representation in this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Williams. I have quite a number of names on my list. Try to make your response brief. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: All I just want to point out is that, as a government and people in Nunavut, it is up to us to try to look at the issue and try to solve some of the issues around suicide.

On the Federal Government on the paper the Member is talking about, I have a copy of that too. That disturbs me. They never approached me as the Minister of Health for Nunavut's involvement; or advice in the process that they put together.

However, on Page 38 of that report, they make one important point, they say suicide among First Nations youth is a political issue involving the Government of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations and First Nation Communities and members.

And the Federal Government talks about First Nations and Ms. Williams is correct,, they talk about First Nation Indians on or off reserves. If they have used any Inuit in their study, we would probably be a very token amount at that.

So, that was my point. I think maybe at the end of this debate that we have in this Assembly for the first time; maybe one of the recommendations that may come forward is that we petition the Federal Government for monies to do a report like they did with the First Nations in the south.

That is the kind of support I was hoping to have. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Picco for your brief response. I am confused at this point as the Chairperson as some people ask questions and some people have not made statements on this matter and I get confused easily when I am asked a question, but I want you to know that once the statements are done, I will open the floor for questions to the Minister.

So, we have not even reached the point where we can ask questions to the Minister. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have already been given the opportunity to speak to the matter, those of us who were here at the previous meeting.

I thought that only the people who were not present and did not have the opportunity would be the only ones making their statements on this issue. I figured that we have the chance to ask the Minister and his staff on this matter, that is why I thought we had the opportunity to ask questions.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. Suicide is a very serious matter so as Chairperson, I took it upon myself to give each Member an opportunity to make a statement on this very personal matter.

Just be patient with me. We will come to the point where we can ask questions. Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I made my statement yesterday and I would like to ask questions as soon as you are ready. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. Once there are no more comments, then we will proceed. If there are no more general comments, then we will move onto questions. Mr. Puqiqnak.

Mr. Puqiqnak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I would like to read a letter that I received from one of the community Members regarding this matter.

If it is fine with you, I would like to read the letter for the record.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Puqiqnak. Once you are done with the reading of the letter, there is no one else on my list, so we will move onto questions. Go ahead Mr. Puqiqnak, proceed.

Mr. Puqiqnak (interpretation): I can wait until there are no more comments, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Yes, we have a lot of other duties besides the issue of suicide but we would like to take this opportunity to discuss this issue in all aspects so that we can just finish this matter at this time so that Members will not be compelled to return continuously to the issue. Mr. Puqiqnak.

Mr. Puqiqnak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The letter is from Elizabeth Lyall, dated March 6, 2003, to Uriash Puqiqnak, Member of the Legislative Assembly regarding the discussion of suicide.

As discussed earlier, I would like to write this letter regarding the issue of suicide. I have lost my only younger sister in 1992 and that really opened my eyes. I never thought I would be affected by suicide in my family, but now I have gone through it and from then on, I took it upon myself to ensure that I help others who may be going through the same situation.

We have community gatherings in the month of December and open the floor for people to discuss their hurts. We light candles and have vigils and this has made it easier to cope

for all victims of suicide. We know that we have to start discussing this matter, especially the problems we have in our lives.

If we do not speak about our problems, the hurt will compound more within us.

With that in mind we have to commit ourselves to helping each other, everyone around us. My request is that we who volunteer need training in this matter, however brief such training may be made available.

The CHRs as well as social workers do not seem to have the resources nor the time to deal with this matter. So the volunteers in the communities who put in the time to help other should be recognized and get formalized training so that we are equipped to further help members in the community, particularly in the smaller communities.

I am very aware that having a good life may make this issue easier to deal with. It is apparent that if there are support services, it may help alleviate the problem of suicide.

Thank you for giving opportunity to write you in this important matter.

Sincerely, Elizabeth Lyall. Thank you.

>> *Applause*

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Puqiqnak. General comments. Last general comments, Mr. Alakannuark.

Mr. Alakannuark (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will make my comments brief. As I always say, I speak as a true Inuk, and from my experiences. Once we see people who want to help, others may offer to help without regard to what type of people they are dealing with.

We as Inuit, it is in our culture not to look down on other people. And that is how I speak from experience. As I said I was going to make my comments brief.

I have known a person who as an adult attempted suicide. With the sudden lifestyle change, this person just did not know how to deal with life anymore.

Those who have attempted suicide should be given support. We also have to seek information from them to find out from them what indicators there are when people think that someone is going to try to attempt suicide.

Just collect this information from people who have actually experienced those feelings. I think that a lot of us are not open to the type of indicators that people may have. It is unfortunate, but it is no one's fault.

I think that it is up to us to support the Minister, and it is not up to him. In the communities, we have to realize that it should all come from helping each other.

I thank the Minister and his staff for trying to deal with this very difficult issue but we have to take it upon ourselves as well.

How can we alleviate the problem of suicide? As I said, my comments were to be brief so, I will leave it at that, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alakannuark. I have no more names on my list. I know that we will be following the House rules once we start dealing with the main estimates, so do not be preoccupied with semantics while we are dealing with such a personal matter.

I just wanted the Members here to complete all their general comments as this is a very important issue. Now we move to the question period in this committee meeting. Going back to Minister's statement, 95-1 (6) and tabled document 30-1 (6), we are now on questions.

Are there any questions? Mr. Havioyak.

Mr. Havioyak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just want to ask questions on some of the comments that were made earlier by some of the Members here. Like James said, the action plan, whether we want to see it go or not is what I am hearing here.

During my statement, I talked about how we can do this action plan at the community level, territorial, federal, it touched upon all of those areas. I have said during my comments about it at the community level that I want to ask the Minister about the type of prevention measures involved and whether they are effective.

We do not know how they will be effective, we do not know that. How were they put out? From that I want to be able to say something as to how we can ask further questions or add more things that have been out there today.

Maybe I'll leave it at that for now. I have one or two more questions after that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Havioyak. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think it is important that we have had success with the suicide strategy as some of the Members have pointed out today.

Some things have been working. And the Member is correct. Since 1999, when we put the mental health strategy in place about a year and half ago and before that, followed up

with some of the extra staffing positions, we have actually seen suicides decrease in Nunavut.

For example, Mr. Chairman, here are some of the brief numbers. In the 2000, we had 30 successful suicides across Nunavut. The next year, we had 27. Last year we had 23. Every year since that strategy has been put into place, some of the things that we have talked about in health, it is actually going down.

Now, the Members will remember, when we were in Cambridge Bay, we unveiled an action plan, talking about strength in communities, strength in culture. We talked about more mental health workers, alcohol and drug workers in communities.

If you look at the numbers, the numbers are actually going down, although they are not going down a huge amount. They are going down about 20 percent over the last two years. I think that is part of the success.

On the strategy itself, we have a mental health strategy, which talks about wellness and talks about some of the issues around family and support. As the Members know we actually hired, as the Member for Repulse and Kugaaruk was saying, helping young people, we have actually hired youth outreach workers in communities for the first time. I want to say that there has been success and part of the answer to the question is yes, the answer to the first question was yes.

Your second question was yes and the third question is that we are actually doing it. I would like to ask Mr. Best to add a couple of comments, Mr. Chairman on the issue of suicide, as his background is psychology and he can give us a little bit of insight. With that I will ask Mr. Best. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Picco. Mr. Best.

Mr. Best: Mr. Chairman, before I answer the question, I wonder if I can just make a brief comment that pertains to the answer of my question. Stoffman said that life is a compelling force and we know that most people would prefer to live as opposed to die.

We have seen a lot of that even when people are having their last breath. Because of that, I believe that we can make an impact in terms of what is happening here in Nunavut with the number of individuals who have taken their own lives.

One of the things that we have been trying to do as I look at some of the programs, is to instil hope and purpose and meaning. Some of that has been done through what we describe as per the peer manual that have been used, episodically or periodically across the territory.

But let me just say this as I was talking about these different pieces. We still need to do more and we really do not have a comprehensive, focused plan on suicide. We have got a

plan that is Mental Addictions Plan that as it broadens, it heals and helps individuals to live and help individuals to move toward wellness.

But truly, what we need is the kind of plan that does not just start where the parents and the children are. To the school system, the school system needs to adopt the Peer Manual in a serious way and start teaching kids and young people ways of coping because that is part of the problem.

You look at three major emotions; anxiety, depression and anger. Those are some of the areas that young people have difficulty coping with. So you get anxious and you go and take a drink then you feel good for a while and then you get worse, you get depressed and then whatever.

The bottom line is, you are looking at the best ways to cope with behaviours that might and can be described really, as self-destructive behaviours. I would say that most of those programs have been geared towards trying to help individuals cope with those kinds of things that they are faced with.

And you talk to young people who are thinking about suicide, you hear young people say, there is nothing here for me. There is no value here. There is no love here. I am depleted of spirit.

Those are powerful emotional words that tell you that if they continue to play around in their heads or the jingle channel goes around and around and you cannot get control, that at some point they are going to take action and the action that you may take is one that says: I do not want to be here anymore. That my life is no good, let us put it that way.

So, most of our programs have been focussed in those areas. Where the programs are lacking, in my view, are the consistency. The school does not have the consistent program.

There is no program in the communities that are consistent, that are attacking the problems that parents are having in terms of how to deal with children and what you have got is Social Services which is the last resort when all of these things break down.

I guess what I would like to see is more resources put into having a more focussed plan moving toward eliminating some of those self-destructive behaviours that we often see when kids are trying to cope.

Mr. Chairman, I do not know if that answers the question, but that is the problem as I see it.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Best. Mr. Haviyok you were not finished?

Mr. Havioyak: Thank you. Yes, part of the question is answered. But I was more interested in what type of answer has been put out in Nunavut. Do they understand? I am just trying to get a picture of where we are at in the prevention of this here. How you get the word out to the public? Advertising I guess is what I am trying to say.

Anyways if those kinds of things were available to us, there are going to be more questions come out how we can try and get around and make sure that we can try and get the right message out to each community.

I talked about it earlier, again community-based, community level. I really do feel that community workshop and the continued use of follow up where you need to, which community you need to follow up on.

I used Kugluktuk as an example where we had a workshop and a working relationship with another community. It was a good workshop. The community workshop that took place in Kugluktuk, after two or three years everyone forgot about the workshop. What do we do again?

We need to continue to do the follow up, especially on prevention. Without the follow up, it will never be an effective workshop. Again, we cannot do it alone as a Government, we can do it as a community working together.

The action plan that we want to do, they are going to want to hear from my community what type of things that they want to do in my community, because it cannot be the same thing as to where I use you as an example, are we in the same boat? Are we having similar problems or activities in the communities that think about suicide?

I want to ask the Minister in this type of thing that happened in the past, so far to date on the community workshop, I know that I am going into details; it is going to be interesting this type of workshop that we want to do and what are we going to do in the future about this action plan?

I will leave it at that. I know that it is detailed but I think that we need to know these things. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Havioyak. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I think the Member for Kugluktuk has picked up on a couple of key points. What may work in Kugluktuk may not work in Clyde River or may not work in Gjoa Haven.

At the end of the day, we need to be able to massage whatever program we put in place and to specifically identify and help those communities. Out of one of those workshops that you were talking about in Rankin Inlet last month, we had people in there from different communities.

It is interesting to see what young people and adults, they had adults, they had elders there, and they had good involvement from elected council members, and so on. I think that it is interesting to point out what they showed and demonstrated.

The top three concerns that the adults had at that suicide workshop last month, for example, the three top issues was for adults to show that you care, that they have concerns about the young people's future and feelings.

Do you know what the three concerns of the youth were; gambling, alcohol and drugs, abuse and they say all abuse. It goes back to what the Member for Amittuq was saying, are we open, are we listening to what people are telling us.

Why are young people looking differently at issues? For example, structure, church, and so on. The issue directly, in the workshop, we have hired several new people over the last several months to begin working more on exactly what the Member was talking about.

For example, the Federal Government have helped us on wellness programs and I thank them for that. We have over \$1.3 million dollars available to communities across Nunavut under the building health communities for suicide or crisis intervention.

Any community can apply for those monies, \$1.3 million dollars for suicide or crisis intervention and we have had communities access that money. And we have people in each part of Nunavut. For example, in Kugluktuk or in the Kitikmeot, Ernie Bernhardt is one of our facilitators, who is someone you know quite well.

Louis Taparti is one of our facilitators in the Kivalliq, and here in the Baffin Region, we actually have three different people, all Inuit to facilitate the \$1.3 million dollars, on top of all the other monies we have for wellness.

That is how we are working out some of these workshops. So, the community of Kugluktuk, after having a workshop three years ago, could request a workshop this year Mr. Chairman and say we would like to do another one. And that is how they could do it for example through healthy communities or brighter futures or community wellness. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Picco. I have no other names on my list. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On the questions I posed earlier, he did not answer the other one and for those of us elders, it is getting a little late in the day.

(interpretation end) Mr. Chairman, I stated before, there are two cultures clashing. It might not be the reason. Some of it might be the root. My western friends work very hard to live comfortably or to create something that might make life easier for them such as

inventing the wheel, electricity, central heating and microwave ovens and anything to make life easier.

It has become so easy that you only have to make money now in order to survive the western standard. There are over 5000 people in Iqaluit now. If we were living the way Inuit were, all the caribou probably would have been gone by now.

We rely on stores to supplement our diets. That makes it a lot easier for my son who hopefully will not commit suicide when he's 18 or 17. If I don't teach him how my ancestors or my father for that matter was obsessed with surviving, how are we going to get the next meal tomorrow?

If he didn't catch a seal, we'd go hungry. That is all he would think about, surviving. No wondering, how we thought growing up was surviving. How not to die. So those two cultures are clashing, turn a new page where we became militant in interpreting this to our children and that is why they are different. Of course, we left ourselves to go to school and left our parents and we really did not know how to cope.

But we were very lucky that we had counsellors and supervisors and teachers who understood we are parentless during those hostile times. They were really helpful. But when we got back, we really did not know how to parent.

We are intelligent people. We know how to become Ministers and engineers and whatever, teachers. But we really do not know how we are supposed to prevent our children from having too much candy or not too much TV.

We forgot to take them out on the land more than we should. It is not our fault, it is the system. We really forgot how to see before hand what is troubling them. When they are having a problem with their girlfriends or boyfriends, we just say it is nothing.

But to them it is a really a big thing. Or sometimes when they are poor too long or they do not get new clothes for quite some time, it really bothers them. It did not bother me. I had the same clothes for a full year until it was ragged and my old man gets me new rubber boots once it is spring time, once a year, one pair you know, for the year. I took them for dancing too.

What affects you psychologically or emotionally is different. We have forgotten to recognize that because to us it was nothing, because as long as we were not hungry at that time, everything else was easy. I think we are going to have to be a lot more sensitive to our young people about what may bother them and what may not bother us.

My question, Mr. Chairman, is there some kind of commissioner to study this, who is not biased, who is a survivor, some kind of commission similar to the Romanow Report or something like that on suicide, the process, history of those suicide attempts, including all of them, because we have no answers because we lived completely different from that past.

So then they could tell us what went wrong on average. It will not be identical as a society because they are a result of the society, although individual suicides, but how the society has evolved to a distinct society. Some kind of commission or study by Nunavummiut that could give us a report and say that some of this report is valid.

Some of it might not be but some of it will be valid. That would be a start. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. We are in questions right now so please keep your preambles short and concentrate on the questions. I will give Mr. Picco an opportunity to respond.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have talked a little bit about that. I think that would probably be one of the first things that we should do. We have two individuals right now who have been doing some work and starting on April 1st. We chose that because it is a new fiscal year. And the project is called Tukisiniaqtut.

Mr. Arvaluk: Tunkisiniaqtut.

Hon. Ed Picco: Tukisiniaqtut. Anyway, one of those Members is next to me and I am going to ask Andrew, Mr. Tagak, maybe to give a little overview on what he and Louis will be doing.

And the plan Mr. Chairman, right now and maybe we can broaden it with recommendations from this committee, a motion from the committee saying the other information you would like to see.

But the plan is right now, where Andrew and Louis would be going around to communities. We will take X number of communities and we would ask individual families.

What was going on with that person before they committed suicide and find common markers, common values, exactly what you are asking for change. Were they adopted? Were their parents older? Were they employed? Were they in a long-term relationship with their girl from a very early age?

These are things we are hearing from elders and from other people and then to see what is actually occurring.

So, if I could ask, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Tagak, to just basically talk about some of that and some of the work that they will be doing, he and Louis Tuksigaqtuq over the next little while, Mr. Chairman; Mr. Tagak.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Picco and to Mr. Tagak.

Mr. Tagak (interpretation): Since a few days ago, there has been some statements made about suicide and it is a very prominent task that the Government has taken on.

And because of this realization, we have to take some sort of a step in order to start combating the issue of suicide. Not everything works, but it does not have a heavy enough impact.

So, what we decided to do was to go out and talk to the people, to the communities and that would be the initial step. The people out there can tell us what we can do or what we should be doing and we were also told that we would have two main tasks.

On April 1, we will start touring the communities to talk to the people directly to ask those questions. I am sure they are being recorded, that were tabled here in this House. We will not have an Interpreter; we will talk to the people directly and direct communication because we have no other alternative but talk to the people of Nunavut.

And we do not want to keep dragging this because the people are here, they are living in Nunavut, they are from Nunavut and they are the only ones who have never been asked those vital questions.

So, since we have no other alternatives, this is what we are going to start doing. What I am saying is let us do this by using Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit as our foundation. So, that is what we are going to be doing on April 1.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Andrew. Very informative. Mr. Irqittuq.

Mr. Irqittuq (interpretation): Yes, I am very glad that we are going to be taking the initial steps from here and to hear from the people. To keep it very brief, but I would like to reiterate because of course, we have a lot of time yet.

In 1966, Hall Beach was established and all the people of Hall Beach in 1966 permanently moved to the established community. There were very few families who still lived in Outpost Camps.

For 19 years there was never one single suicide committed. Then, in 1984-95, that is when the suicides started after the different denominations started coming into the community.

If we are talking about the establishment of a Commission, I like the idea and some of the comments that the Minister had stated is that they were, they are asking questions, one of the questions is going to be whether the individuals were adopted or if their parents were older and etc...

And because of this epidemic and our having no other alternatives, there has to be another study done to look at the implementation and the action plans out of it. After this consulting period, we will have an idea of why they commit suicide.

Like I mentioned a little bit earlier on, our parents, when they passed away, because we were children, the mother, the grandfather, or their blood relative was wrapped without having the child see what is happening, or letting the children know.

At that time, it was an Inuk custom. If my mother died, for example, if my grandmother died for example, you bury and then that was it. You forget about them.

Those are some of the negative impacts that are very possibly a part of the problem. I think that Andrew knows exactly what I am talking about. I am sure that it will be included in this consultation period. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): I did not hear a question. I think that was quite clear. As Dr. Best stated earlier, we will have to include the schools, to teach the students. I think that they should be part of the consulting process because of course the school population learn two cultures hand in hand, one from the parent base and one from the school system base. I have no other names. I apologize; I did not see your hand. Ms. Thompson.

Hon. Maniok Thompson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. An elder in Iqaluit gave me some suggestions on what to say. It is very brief. This individual thinks that people who attempted suicide but survived, should be the ones that the *Tukisiniaqtut*, ask. That was one question that was given to me by an elder from Iqaluit. I would like to say hello to all the people in Iqaluit. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Thompson. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I also received a letter from the same individual and I spoke to him at some length this afternoon on some of the issues around suicide. I appreciate the letter as well as the comments from the Member.

I wanted to say a couple of things on the *Tukisiniaqtut*, that Andrew and our other colleague will be working on. I wanted to make sure that there is no finger pointing. They are going to be using Inuit Qaujimaqatuqangit. It is very low key.

Andrew is not going to go into a community and hold a public meeting. They are going to deal with families one on one, and maybe go on local radio and say look we are here. We would like to talk about some of these issues, and people are going to be able to go and see them.

It will be done very quietly and confidentially. We are not there to blame people and so on. For example, one of things that we want to find out from Health is if a person committed suicide, was there enough support from the Department of Health? Did I have enough people to help this person? Were they being ignored?

These are the kinds of things that we will find out. And Andrew and Louis will be able to look at different communities. They will report back to me and then I would report back to the House.

I would like to see coming out of this over the next couple of days from our debate today, Mr. Chairman, I think that we are right road. As I said earlier, we have seen the number of suicide drop in the last two years, which is a very good thing. I think it is from some of the work that we have done.

I would like to see some of the motions in the committees over the next few days giving me instructions to go the *Tukisinaqtut* group that Andrew and Louis will be working with and other people, so that those recommendations can be implemented. Real plans and real ideas.

That is a good point. And the other point I would like to make very quickly before the end Mr. Chairman, is that as I said earlier, there are good data and good statistics on suicide. For example, we know some communities have had no suicides.

There must be something working in those communities. So Andrew and Louis will be talking to people in those communities too, to find out what is working and if it is something we can use in other communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Picco. Manitok.

Hon. Manitok Thompson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My question is very short. I need an answer that is yes or no, I do not need a great big explanation. This is my first experience asking a Minister.

Can you go out and study, do something with the people who have attempted suicide? That was the request! Can they zero in on those individuals and ask them why or if they have any solutions to this? Can you please do that? Just say yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairperson (interpretation): I think we have to keep in mind that the people have to be willing to be involved. Thank you. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: I was asked that question earlier today and you will remember that I said yes and the answer is still ii, iilaa. Ma'na.

Chairperson (interpretation): I have one more person on my list. Ms. Williams.

Ms. Williams (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Minister for informing us that they would talk with the social workers and counsellors to see if they have the adequate support that they need in helping others.

Just last year in our community, there was a murder/suicide that happened and there were two deaths at the same time. That day was very hard on the community. That experience happened when I was a social worker and as the social worker, I had to deal with that crisis situation and I had administrative work to do as well.

So I am very happy to know that you are going to be looking into whether you have the adequate support for your social workers and counsellors. I would like to say that I appreciate that you will talk with social workers to make sure that they have the support that they need to be competent in their positions. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): That is a very good comment. Jobie.

Mr. Nutarak (interpretation): At the present time, I think that we do not need to make action plans because there are going to be suggestions coming from other organizations in April after the conference. We are just discussing it at this time to start talking about suicide and we have to take it out of the closet and discuss it. I am thankful that it is out in the open.

The Minister of Health and Social Services stated that he has a task force who will be working with communities to seek information and we know that individually, we all know people who are waiting to give interviews.

Personally I think that there are more capable people out there who can deal with this matter. There are people more than willing to help in answering questions that we may have about suicide. I would like to move on with this issue.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Nutarak. We have no more people to make comments.

I think our witnesses have concluded their comments. Before we adjourn for the day, I would like to make a brief comment. The people who work for Social Services in the community, are they compassionate enough and when they deal with people and if they are just going by the book with their job and they do not have any compassion toward the people they are trying to help is not good. I just wanted to clarify that. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): We are not Social Workers and I do not think that we should really bring it up, but Jobie did not make a motion to adjourn, but there is going to be Canadian Suicide Prevention Symposium and I am sure that they are going to make recommendations on Suicide Prevention and I move that we report progress.

Chairperson (interpretation): Does the Committee agree that we report progress?
Minister Statement, 95-1(6). Tabled Document 30-1(6). Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson (interpretation): I would like to thank the Minister and his witnesses and they were very interesting comments that you made and I think Manitok has something else to say before we adjourn. Sorry, our Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize if we were a bit longer and Minister Thompson said last year when I had done my budget in record time four times. Next week, when I do my budget, she is hoping that I can do it in 45 minutes and so am I. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>*Laughter*

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. Thank you for coming. The Speaker can return now.

Speaker: Returning to Orders of the Day. Item 22. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Chairman. Mr. Iqaqrialu.

Item 22: Report of Committee of the Whole

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your Committee has been considering Minister Statement 95-1 (6). Tabled Document 30-1 - (6) and would like to report that Minister Statement 91-1 (6) and Tabled Document 31-1 (6) are concluded.

And, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a Motion on the Floor. Is there a seconder for the Motion? Is there a seconder for the Motion? Mr. Arvaluk.

>>*Laughter*

The motion is in order. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried. Item 23. Third Reading of Bills. Item 24. Orders of the Day. Mr. Clerk.

Item 24: Orders of the Day

Clerk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A reminder to Members for tomorrow morning, a meeting of the full caucus at 9:00 and a meeting of the regular caucus at 10:00.

Orders for the Day for Wednesday, March 12th:

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. Replies to Budget Address
11. Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
14. Tabling of Documents
15. Notices of Motions
16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
17. Motions
 - Motion 18-1(6)
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 28
 - Bill 29
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 22
 - Bill 23
 - Bill 24
 - Bill 30
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 12, at 1:30.

Sergeant-at-Arms

>>*House adjourned at 18:56 p.m.*

