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Tuesday, February 21, 2006

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Iqaluit

Speaker: The Honourable Jobie Nutarak, M.L.A.

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Jobie Nutarak

(Tununiq)

Chair, Management and Services Board

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq

(Nattilik)

Minister of Health and Social Services; Minister Responsible for Status of Women's Council

Tagak Curley

(Rankin Inlet North)

Striking Committee; Management and Services Board; Regular Members' Caucus

Hon. Paul Okalik

(Iqaluit West)

Premier; Minister of Justice; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs

Hon. Olayuk Akasuk

(South Baffin)

Minister of Economic Development and Transportation; Minister of Environment; Minister Responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation; Minister Responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board

Joe Allen Evyagotailak

(Kugluktuk)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole; Chair, Regular Members' Caucus

Keith Peterson

(Cambridge Bay)

Striking Committee; Management and Services Board; Regular Members' Caucus

Peter Kattuk

(Hudson Bay)

Regular Members' Caucus

Hon. Ed. Picco

(Iqaluit East)

Government House Leader; Minister of Education; Minister of Energy; Minister Responsible for Multiculturalism, Homelessness and Immigration

David Alagalak

(Arviat)

Regular Members' Caucus

Peter Kilabuk

(Pangnirtung)

Regular Members' Caucus

Steve Mapsalak

(Akulliq)

Co-Chair, Full Caucus; Regular Members' Caucus

Hon. David Simailak

(Baker Lake)

Minister of Finance; Chair of the Financial Management Board

James Arreak

(Uqqurmiut)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Hunter Tootoo

(Iqaluit Centre)

Striking Committee; Management and Services Board; Regular Members' Caucus;

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk

(Amittuq)

Minister of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth; Minister of Human Resources

Levi Barnabas

(Quttiktuq)

Chair, Full Caucus; Regular Members' Caucus

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(Rankin Inlet South-Whale Cove)

Deputy Premier; Minister of Community Government and Government Services

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Table of Contents

Opening Prayer.....	806
Speaker's Ruling	807
Ministers' Statements	809
Members' Statements	810
Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery.....	817
Oral Questions	819
Returns to Written Questions	838
Tabled Documents.....	838
Orders of the Day	839

A.

Daily References

Tuesday, February 21, 2006 806

B.

Ministers' Statements

053 – 2(3): Minister Tapardjuk Absent from the House (Picco)..... 809
054 – 2(3): 2006-07 Budget Address (Simailak)..... 809
055 – 2(3): Update on Financial Reporting (Simailak) 809

C.

Members' Statements

098 – 2(3): Member Arreak Absent from House (Evyagotailak)..... 810
099 – 2(3): Prohibition of Polar Bear Hides to the U.S. (Barnabas) 810
100 – 2(3): Canada Winter Games Mascot (Netser) 811
101 – 2(3): Congratulate the Arviat Search and Rescue Team (Alagalak) 811
102 – 2(3): Passing of Elisapee Karlik (Curley)..... 812
103 – 2(3): Lack of Support for Disabled Persons (Tootoo)..... 812
104 – 2(3): Cambridge Bay Wellness Centre (Peterson) 814
105 – 2(3): Congratulations to Aglaktiit Tusaajit Members (Mapsalak) 815
106 – 2(3): Polar Bear Issues and Climate Change (Kattuk)..... 815
107 – 2(3): New Role as a Regular Member of the Legislative Assembly (Kilabuk)..... 816

D.

Oral Questions

118 – 2(3): Update on the Management of Polar Bears (Barnabas)..... 819
119 – 2(3): Housing for 26 New Positions for Health and Social Services (Tootoo) 821

120 – 2(3): Yellowknife Boarding Home Inspections (Peterson)	823
121 – 2(3): Placement of International Nurses (Curley)	825
122 – 2(3): Patient Escort Requirements (Mapsalak).....	827
123 – 2(3): Research on Polar Bears Due to Climate Change (Kattuk)	830
124 – 2(3): Update on Providing a Tracking System for Missing Hunters (Alagalak)	831
125 – 2(3): Number of Vacant Units (Tootoo).....	832
126 – 2(3): Tabling of 2004-05 Public Accounts (Peterson).....	834
127 – 2(3): Federal Funding for Childcare Programs (Barnabas)	836

E.

Returns to Written Questions

Return to Written Questions 001 – 2(3), 002 – 2(3), 004 – 2(3), 005 – 2(3), 006 – 2(3), 007 – 2(3), 008 – 2(3), and 009 – 2(3) (Clerk)	838
---	-----

F.

Tabled Documents

068 – 2(3): Statutory Requirements for Tabling of Reports and Other Documents in the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut February 2006 (Speaker).....	838
069 – 2(3): 2003-04 Public Accounts of Nunavut (Simailak).....	839
070 – 2(3): 2004-05 Interim Financial Report (Simailak).....	839
071 – 2(3): Response to Petition 01 – 2(3): GN Staff Housing Policy (Clerk)	839
072 – 2(3): 2005 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut (Speaker)	839

Iqaluit, Nunavut
Tuesday, February 21, 2006

Members Present:

Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Honourable Olayuk Akesuk, Mr. David Alagalak, Mr. Levi Barnabas, Honourable Levinia Brown, Mr. Tagak Curley, Mr. Joe Allan Evyagotailak, Mr. Peter Kattuk, Mr. Peter Kilabuk, Mr. Steve Mapsalak, Mr. Patterk Netser, Honourable Jobie Nutarak, Honourable Paul Okalik, Mr. Keith Peterson, Honourable Edward Picco, Honourable David Simailak, Mr. Hunter Tootoo.

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (interpretation): I would like to ask Mr. Netser to say the opening prayer.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good afternoon Premier, Members, and Ministers. Welcome to Iqaluit for our session. Just before we go to the Orders of the Day, I'll be reading a letter.

February 17, 2006

Mr. Jobie Nutarak
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Iqaluit, Nunavut
X0A 0H0

Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise that I recommend to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut, the passage of the following bills during the third session of the second Legislative Assembly:

- Bill 12, *Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2006-07*
- Bill 13, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act #3, 2005-06*
- Bill 14, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act #3, 2005-06*

Sincerely, Ann Mikijuk Hanson, Commissioner of Nunavut.

As members are aware, we did not broadcast our proceedings on the Aboriginal People's Television Network during our last sitting. Unfortunately, the Assembly's administration has not been able to come to an acceptable agreement with APTN, so we will once again not be able to offer Nunavut-wide television coverage of our proceedings.

The Assembly's administration is actively pursuing alternative broadcast solutions and I am confident that we will soon be able to share the important work we do in this chamber across Nunavut.

I would like to thank the members and all Nunavummiut for their patience during this unfortunate situation.

**Speaker's Ruling
February 21, 2006**

At this time, I would like to deliver my ruling on the Point of Order raised on December 1, 2005, by the Member for Iqaluit Centre. In coming to my ruling, I have considered the *Hansard*, two independent translations of the remarks that gave rise to the Point of Order and the audio recordings of the remarks. Although there are minor differences in versions, the nature, context, and intent of the remarks are consistent.

Given that it has been some time since the issue arose, it will be useful to review the background that brought us to today. The Point of Order was raised during debate on a motion relating to the timing of the Midterm Leadership Review of the Executive Council. The Leadership Review, by an earlier motion of the Assembly, had been scheduled for the fall of 2006. At our last sitting, a motion was made to bring the review forward that it be completed no later than March 30, 2006.

An amendment to the motion was made. The motion to amend it was made by the Regular Members of the Assembly. The amendment provided that the review be completed by June 30, 2006.

During the debate on the amendment to the motion a number of members, including Members of the Executive Council, spoke in favour of the amendment. The rationale given for supporting the amendment was that if the review were to be completed by March 30, 2006, it would overlap and detract from consideration of the Government's 2006-07 budget.

Those who spoke in favour of the amendment stated that they wanted all members to be able to give their full attention to both the budget and the Leadership Review; the amendment to the motion passed and debate progressed to the motion as amended, which now provided that the Leadership Review be brought forward from the fall to occur no later than June 30, 2006.

The Member for Rankin Inlet North rose to speak to the motion as amended. At that time he stated:

The midterm review has now been moved forward from September. It would have been better if you were given more time to do your work. It will also make the ministers happier as they can now earn of their salaries to that date of the review, increase their pension amount after their four year terms are up, and give them

more time to sign cheques for three more months. The way the motion is worded, we all have been given rights and we also know and understand that the end of June will not be good for the people of Nunavut...

At this juncture, a Point of Order was raised. In the Point of Order, the Member for Iqaluit Centre was of the view of that the statement imputed a false motive to members of the Executive Council, who voted in favour of the amendment.

The contents of the member's remark raise a number of concerns. The remark suggests that the Members of the Executive Council voted in favour of the amendment for three reasons:

1. so that they can be assured higher salaries for a longer period;
2. so that they will have a longer period to incur pension benefits at a higher rate; and
3. so that they can continue to sign cheques for a longer period.

Our rules provide that a member will be called to order if a member imputes false or hidden motives to another member. In other words, it's improper to suggest that another member is doing something for reasons different than those stated by the member. To do so is to impute false or hidden motive. Our rules in this regard are in keeping with parliamentary tradition.

Members of the Executive Council who voted in favour of the amendment stated that they supported the amendment because it would allow the Assembly to direct its full attention to both the budget debate and the Midterm Leadership Review. In his remarks, the Member for Rankin Inlet North did not accept this as being the motivation for supporting the amendment and, instead, stated that Members of the Executive Council supported the motion only for personal gain. This is, indeed, imputing false motive and is a breach of our rules and parliamentary tradition. Accordingly, I uphold the Point of Order.

During my review of this matter, a further issue came to light. Upon reviewing the audiotape of proceedings, it's clear that when the Point of Order was raised, the Member for Rankin Inlet North responded by saying, "Ah, shut up."

I have no doubt that the member didn't intend the comment to be picked up by the microphone or to become part of the House's official record. However, the fact is that his microphone was on, the comment was clear, and I have no doubt that if the comment can be heard on the audiotape, it could also be heard by Members of this Assembly and members of the public who were in the Gallery. Such language is not parliamentary and will not be tolerated.

I am, at this time, requesting that the Member for Rankin Inlet North retract his statements, both of which I have ruled not parliamentary. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for reminding me, and I retract my statements. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Orders of the Day. Ministers' Statements. Mr. Picco.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 053 – 2(3): Minister Tapardjuk Absent from the House

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to advise the members that the Honourable Louis Tapardjuk will be absent from the House today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Mr. Simailak.

Minister's Statement 054 – 2(3): 2006-07 Budget Address

Hon. David Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to inform members that tomorrow, Wednesday, February 22, I will present the Government of Nunavut's 2006-07 Main Estimates in the Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Mr. Simailak.

Minister's Statement 055 – 2(3): Update on Financial Reporting

Hon. David Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today I'll be tabling the government's 2003-04 Public Accounts and the 2004-05 Interim Financial Statements.

The Auditor General continues to express concern over delays in the delivery of this important information, and I share this concern.

My department is making concerted efforts to eliminate the causes of these delays in order to meet the government's legislated obligations. Initiatives already underway include:

- recruitment of qualified staff as a priority to fill vacancies;
- automation of financial reporting processes wherever possible;
- closer collaboration of departments and agencies, and provision of technical support to help solve reporting problems;
- coordination, timely communication, and closer monitoring to facilitate reporting by departments;
- a move towards more frequent accrual accounting and a current reconciliation during the fiscal year.

The plan is for the introduction of quarterly financial reporting later in the fiscal year and restructuring of my department's financial reporting and operational functions to enhance reporting efficiency.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that my staff is making good progress towards timely reporting of the government's finances. I shall provide updates to the Assembly as and when appropriate.

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Item 3. Members' Statements. Mr. Evyagotailak.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 098 – 2(3): Member Arreak Absent from House

Mr. Evyagotailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon to everyone here and this is just for information for each member here. I'm sorry Mr. Arreak is not here and I'm sure he's coming in tonight from his settlement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Item 3. Members' Statements. Mr. Barnabas.

Member's Statement 099 – 2(3): Prohibition of Polar Bear Hides to the U.S.

Mr. Barnabas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in regard to a letter that I wrote on February 15 to the Minister of Environment.

This is in regard to the United States, who is going to be preventing our polar bear hides from being exported outside of the country. As you are aware, on February 6, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced that it's initiating a status review of the polar bear to determine if the species should be listed as threatened. Under that country's (U.S. Legislation) *Endangered Species Act*, a 60-day public comment period has now commenced.

This is a concern from my community and, if you recall, I raised concerns in the House on November 28, 2005 concerning this very same issue. If the United States Government were to prohibit the importation of polar bear trophies into the U.S., this would have a potentially serious economic impact in my community and on my constituents.

With that Mr. Speaker, and at the appropriate time, I will be directing questions to the minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Item 3. Members' Statements. Mr. Netser.

Member's Statement 100 – 2(3): Canada Winter Games Mascot

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Olympic fever is in the air. The Arctic Winter Games will start in less than two weeks. In 2007, the Canada Winter Games will draw athletes from across Canada to compete in Whitehorse, Yukon.

I rise today to congratulate young Timothy Pooka, a grade four student from my home community of Coral Harbour, for naming Nunavut's mascot to the Canada Winter Games. The mascot, in the form of a traditional Inuit dog dressed in sealskin, will be called *Uqila*, which means 'fast and light on your feet.'

Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the Yukon's willingness and support to ensure that all three northern territories are able to participate and compete fully in these games.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that Timothy has captured the spirit of the Nunavut team with the naming of our mascot. I am proud of his participation and I ask members to join me in congratulating him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Mr. Alagalak.

Member's Statement 101 – 2(3): Congratulate the Arviat Search and Rescue Team

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a short comment. I am very pleased and I congratulate the people of Arviat and their search and rescue parties. I thank the participants very much; they worked extremely hard.

I would also like to congratulate my son and my brother who went out there to search for the people during extreme conditions. They were the ones who found the equipment and that was the focal point when they were looking for the people who were lost.

It gave the other participants encouragement who found the individuals and I would like to send my condolences to the families who lost their relatives. I am extremely proud of my sons and my younger one who was delegated to get the bodies out there and bring them back to the communities. I never thought that he would do such heroic things when he was a little boy, but it's a sign of him growing up to be a man from a boy; that's my indicator.

I didn't participate in that, but he did things that a young man or a little boy would never do. I'm very proud of him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Mr. Curley.

Member's Statement 102 – 2(3): Passing of Elisapee Karlik

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just last month, the people of Rankin Inlet went through hard times because, of course, that happens in every community.

On February 8, in Rankin Inlet, we lost an elder, Mrs. Elisapee Karlik, who was sick for a brief time and died very shortly after. She is the wife of Pierre Karlik, they have children, and they are a family that the people of Nunavut should envy. They have relatives in all of the regions in Nunavut. Pierre Karlik can't walk, but he's a very wise man. I usually go and see him to consult on various issues.

Mrs. Elisapee Karlik had six children, both men and women, and 13 grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. I think there are seven siblings. She was the oldest in the family and when we lost her, the whole community of Rankin Inlet felt the loss, and not only our community of Rankin Inlet, but also the other communities.

We have lost a beloved one and usually the husband or wife used to give advice to the young people on family issues and advice before they get married on what to do. Mr. and Mrs. Karlik at one point stated that once they are married, now we have to help them so that they can stay together.

This is a very strong family and we send our condolences to the family of Mrs. Elisapee Karlik. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Member's Statements. Mr. Tootoo.

Member's Statement 103 – 2(3): Lack of Support for Disabled Persons

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome all members back to our beautiful capital City of Iqaluit and to the chambers here. I'm sure all of us look forward to a very busy and productive sitting this time around again.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a situation that unfortunately seems to occur on a regular basis. Even more unfortunate is the fact that we hear about it once the situation has become desperate.

Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions over the past few years, the stories of parents with children who need help and support to overcome their disability has appeared in the media. These are not late breaking news stories. Sadly, in most cases, it's the latest chapter of a long and drawn out struggle to access the appropriate services for a disabled individual from Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, it is a sad time when our government seeks not to save those in need of support, but instead seeks to push them through the cracks and out the door.

It is a sad time when individuals travel to another jurisdiction to receive vital services that are not available in Nunavut only to be told once they have done so that they are no longer eligible for health benefits in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, just before Christmas, Nunavut's Disabilities Society held its first annual meeting here in Iqaluit. I would like to commend the individuals who spoke at that meeting for sharing their stories of the difficulties they face living with a disability in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, it is a sad reflection on our government that after being in existence for almost six years, that there is still no coordinated effort by the government to address the needs of people with disabilities across Nunavut.

This task is left to other organizations such as NTI or to selfless and dedicated individuals, or their parents. Mr. Speaker, on November 26, 2004, our Premier tabled *Pinasuaqtavut*, the Government's commitment to building Nunavut's future. That document lists four guiding principals.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to ask unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Speaker (interpretation): The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statements. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Tootoo, if you would proceed please.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues.

That document lists four guiding principals including: *Pijitsiniq, Serving and Providing for Family and Community; and, Qanuituniq, Being Innovative and Resourceful.*

Mr. Speaker, in the past, Inuit had to continually seek new ways to survive. Inuit had to look after each other. Inuit had to be adaptable. It is time our government started taking these principals to heart. Our government must strengthen the safety net. Our government must make sure that its policies can adapt to the challenges faced in delivering services to those in need.

Mr. Speaker, our government cannot afford to neglect or reject a distinct group of Nunavut residents. The problem will not go away; it will just get worse. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Mr. Peterson.

Member's Statement 104 – 2(3): Cambridge Bay Wellness Centre

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to rise today to report on the good work that the Cambridge Bay Wellness Centre is doing in our community. Our wellness centre is a vital facility; it provides counselling services to our resident to help cope with alcohol, drugs, and violence problems. The centre also operates the Cambridge Bay Crisis Shelter, which provides shelter for women from violence.

There is overwhelming evidence that a number of Nunavummiut of all ages do not enjoy a high standard of living, or even a decent quality of life because of problems of alcohol and violence.

In Cambridge Bay, the wellness centre has been working for many years, with the support of the hamlet council and the community, to help people heal. For the most part, the work has gone unnoticed, except for the people of Cambridge Bay.

Last year, the wellness centre established a successful 28-Day Alcohol Treatment Program for women. There has also been a similar successful program for men. In addition, the wellness centre offers anger management programs that have been particularly helpful to our men. Some members even visited the wellness centre in Cambridge Bay by themselves.

Recently, a Nunavut judge and one of the lawyers said that the wellness centre is making a difference to the court dockets. This meant that the court docket has the lowest number of scheduled trials in many years.

We are fortunate in Cambridge Bay to have dedicated staff and facilities to help our people. The same cannot be said for all Nunavut communities where wellness centres do not exist. How will those communities help their residents?

Mr. Speaker, our wellness centre relies almost 100 percent on government contributions to deliver its programs. They also rely on the governments involved to provide a temporary building to deliver those programs. Our centre would also like to offer programs and services to other communities who need help and support.

I encourage the Government of Nunavut to work with the Cambridge Bay Hamlet Council and the wellness centre to investigate the feasibility of a permanent regional facility based in Cambridge Bay that offers counselling programs.

I would like the Members of this House to join me in congratulating the hamlet council and the Cambridge Bay Wellness Centre for the success of the programs in helping improve the lives of our residents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Mr. Mapsalak.

Member's Statement 105 – 2(3): Congratulations to Aglaktiit Tusaajit Members

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about a new entity that arose last year in Repulse Bay; called *Aglaktiit Tusaajit*. They work to support the individuals who would like to go visit relatives that are no longer capable of travelling.

I would like to say how proud I am of this new entity. Last year, they were able to provide \$49,000 to those in need that wanted to go visit their families outside of their communities, or if the family members were ill. I would like to also congratulate the chair, who is an Inuk, who can't even read and write in English. She is Alicee Nanugaq; she is the chair of the board, but Margaret Siusangnark was recently selected.

Along with my colleagues, I would like to congratulate this entity in my community for supporting the whole community of Repulse Bay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Mr. Kattuk.

Member's Statement 106 – 2(3): Polar Bear Issues and Climate Change

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to welcome you back to Iqaluit.

Under Members' Statements, we talk about various issues. This is not a new issue that I want to speak to. I would like to talk about polar bear issues.

We have been talking about climate change for quite time here in the House. I would like to make my statement on that issue because we are now becoming quite concerned about the polar bears.

According to our traditional knowledge and according the advice that is given to me by the hunters, you can see the polar bears are a lot skinnier now and they're not as healthy as before. We hear that it is due to climate change. I myself have seen it, so I believe it.

At the appropriate time, I will be asking the minister questions in regard to this concern and how or what the progress is at the Department of Environment.

Lastly, I would like to state that last winter, a polar bear grabbed the seal I was in the process of butchering. My father said, "The polar bear is hungry, it wants to eat the seal." I have to provide my father with country food, but the polar bear took the seal that I was butchering. For that reason, I believe that we do need to have research done in Nunavut on polar bears because the concern is rising. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Mr. Kilabuk.

Member's Statement 107 – 2(3): New Role as a Regular Member of the Legislative Assembly

>>Applause

Mr. Kilabuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I guess Mr. Speaker, in my humble way it is a special day for me to speak for the first time as a regular member.

>>Applause

(interpretation) And also Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to be just listening to the people asking questions. That's the first thing I would like to state to you Mr. Speaker.

First of all, I would like to thank my wife, Rosie. I would like to thank her very much, also my daughters, Lynne, Jenna, and Alice, and Joseph. I apologize that they're not able to be here in the House today, it was because they have given me so much support that I was able to be a Member of the Executive Council.

I'm sure, with my family's support, they will be able to help me as a Member of the Regular Members' Caucus. I'm sure that my constituents are in support of me. Mr. Speaker, I would like to especially thank Mr. Okalik because he supported and helped me as a Member of the Executive Council.

Also, for the Members of the Executive Council and the regular members, I would like to thank all of you equally.

(interpretation ends) As I said earlier, today is a special day for me. I feel like I have a new sense of desire and direction to finally bring forward to this House issues that will and have affected, concerned, pleased, recognized, acknowledged, rewarded, and now, especially with this opportunity, I will now get to ask questions on their behalf; my great constituents of Pangnirtung.

>>Applause

Mr. Speaker, I will do this without fear, without being intimidated, and as the newest member of this so called regular members, I want to do this to try and achieve the most I can for Pangnirtung and it's residents because I know Mr. Speaker, I joined and add my voice to what is undoubtedly already a force to be reckoned with.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I will be a Member of the Regular Members' Caucus and I will be sitting right across there.

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

Speaker (interpretation): The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Kilabuk, please proceed to complete your statement.

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

Yes, I just want to point out that I will have expectations from the Executive Council in representing my constituency. Mr. Speaker, my expectation is that to be honest, to be truthful, open, and treat me equally the same as the regular members.

The issue, as a Member of the Executive Council, the foundation I was a membership of was that to be honest and truthful.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, overall, I look forward to trying to contribute to this great legislature and to the Nunavut Territory as a whole. I can say this with some relevant confidence that I have gained a considerable amount of experience as a Member of Cabinet with the issues and matters that we dealt with. I also look forward to doing this work through the standing committees, special committees, or just through the opportunities my job may allow.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I humbly look forward to my new role as a Regular Member of this Legislative Assembly, most mindful of my constituents in Pangnirtung. I want to do this in an accountable way that is acceptable to my constituents.

So to that end, Mr. Speaker, I, like other Members of this House, look forward to being part of the important Midterm Leadership Review of Cabinet Members as a regular member as I am sure everybody else is looking forward to that time and opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker and colleagues.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Barnabas.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize today, and I am very pleased to acknowledge our Pages for this week. First of all, to introduce my daughter, Marie Barnabas, please rise, and also, her friend Becky Qaqqasiq-May. They are from Inuujaq School in Arctic Bay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Welcome to the Gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome my wife, Jean, who is sitting in the Gallery and she has been here for a few days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time I would like to recognize a couple individuals in the Gallery. The first, Mr. Speaker, is a well-known resident here in Iqaluit and a great friend of Mr. Picco's, and that's Mr. Kenn Harper sitting in the Gallery. I would like to welcome him to the Gallery.

And sitting next to Mr. Harper, Mr. Picco's close friend, I would like to also acknowledge the presence of Mr. Graham White, who worked with the Members of the First Assembly during the first Midterm Leadership Review. Mr. White is a professor in Toronto, teaching political science, so hopefully he's up here adding another chapter to teach in his classes down there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to the new rules that we adopted before Christmas, we're not allowed to recognize people who have already been recognized, so I won't do that.

I would like to begin by saying very quickly that Mr. Harper is such a good friend of mine that maybe he would help us with a financial contribution to the Nunavut Power Corporation.

>> *Laughter*

I won't recognize him Mr. Speaker. I won't recognize Mr. Graham White, the professor who I have had some debates with about consensus government, of the University of Toronto.

Mr. Speaker, I will recognize Ms. Rosemary Cooper, a constituent of mine, a senior member of the Government of Nunavut with the civil service. I should probably say and point out that when I became the Minister of Health, Rosemary and Mr. Ken MacRury, and I believe we had six staff members at that time in the whole Department of Health, so Rosemary put in yeoman service with the department.

With that, welcome to the Gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Kilabuk.

Mr. Peter Kilabuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize my wife Rosie Kilabuk.

Mr. Speaker, just to say briefly, I am very happy that my wife is here with us today. She is on her way down to Ottawa tomorrow to see her mother who is in the hospital. So I would like to recognize and welcome my wife. Thank you.

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

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome the members.

I would also like to recognize the individual behind me, Jay Redfern. When I was campaigning for the first elections, he assisted me and I would also like to recognize our Sergeant-at-Arms as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Welcome to the Gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Orders of the Day. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for High Arctic, Mr. Barnabas.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 118 – 2(3): Update on the Management of Polar Bears

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I spoke earlier under Member's Statements about polar bears.

The people that I represent do not have a very big population and there are not many jobs available and the only source of income most of the time is big game hunting.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, recent news reports indicate that the United States Government is considering adding the polar bear to its threatened species list. The United States Fish and Wildlife Services is gathering scientific and commercial data to determine if climate change and other threats are diminishing the bears' chance of survival, as my colleague indicated earlier in his statement.

This could result in the United States Government prohibiting the importation of polar bear trophies into the U.S. This would have potentially serious impacts on my communities and constituents.

Mr. Speaker, my question is: what is the status of the department's communication with the U.S. Government on the issue of polar bear management? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for Environment, Mr. Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What my department is doing, at the present time, with the United States Government is we have been talking with them. We will be working on this and we will hear from them in the near future around April 10 as to what kinds of problems there are and how we are going to be working together with the United States Government on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your first supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response.

What information has the minister's department provided to the United States Government and will the Government of Nunavut's submissions to the United States be tabled in the Legislative Assembly so that all members will know what the government's position is? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we have done so far in regard to the polar bear issue is there's an agreement in place with the United States Government and the communities are involved in the decisions of those agreements to deal with the polar bear boundaries. The agreement is in place that deals with the boundaries of the polar bear. That's the agreement that we have with the other countries at the present time.

Speaker (interpretation): Your second supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will there be any changes in the polar bear quotas in 2006-07? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What we have to do is review the quota that is presently set and have an agreement, working along with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board, what they do is they suggest to us whether there should be quota changes or not.

The communities that are going to be impacted, where it may mean less quota, we will be going to the communities first to notify them, but we would like to be viewed in the

world as managing our wildlife properly. So we would like to get the assistance of the communities when we do make any changes to the quota.

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

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question was I think it was last year, or the year before that, that there was an increase in the polar bear quota in the communities. Is there any impact from the response of the United States Government?

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that there is an impact, but in the Nunavut communities, we understand our wildlife because we have been here for a long time. I am sure that there is an impact on the communities; to the Inuit hunters. They have also known for a long time the ways of the wildlife. We have to make it clear that the management of our wildlife is done properly and to fight to be recognized by the people in the world. Thank you.

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

Question 119 – 2(3): Housing for 26 New Positions for Health and Social Services

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Last month, the Minister of Health made an announcement, I believe it was the 26 new positions at the Hospital here, to address some of the major deficiencies which ended up with the Baffin Regional Hospital losing its accreditation.

I know last fall, there were teachers that were living in hotels because there were no units for them. My question to the Minister of Housing is: do they have allocated housing units for these new positions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The staff housing, because there is going to be an increase in the staff, what we are doing is we are doing our best to try to house them properly. What we are going to do is to try to lease more housing for our staff. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your first supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Staff housing has been an issue that has been brought up over and over again for the last six years. It always seems to be...I've talked to people that have put in tenders and had submissions with proposals of units, houses to

rent, whether it be here in Iqaluit or throughout the territory, and the response that they get back from the Housing Corporation is that they don't have the money to lease any more units.

There are new positions, in a case like this where there are 26 new PYs added in one community, not just here, it happens in other communities as well. Are there additional allocations that the Housing Corporation gets to secure units for those positions? Is there a process that the Housing Corporation goes through with the sponsoring department, or whoever has the new positions, in determining whether or not the resources or the housing units will be available for those new PYs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are doing our very best to ensure that we are monitoring the housing situation. We'll need more houses for staff. Not all 26 positions that he mentioned need housing, but there are some that need housing and we're closely monitoring it to make sure that we have proper accommodations for our staff in the future.

We have a working group in our government that is working to find ways to ensure that we accommodate the staff that we've just hired. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your second supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I would ask the minister: there is a working group that he had mentioned; is that working group consulted prior to any announcement of new PYs being added, as to whether or not housing will be available for them?

I'm just wondering if he could explain the process that it goes through to make sure that we're not just saying we're going to fix the problem by hiring all these people, but when the time comes, we can't hire them because we don't have any place to put them. Could we get him to explain that process for us? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the issue of staff housing, it's extremely important and we try to make sure that the staff have adequate housing.

In regard to the Department of Health and Social Services and their staff, I think that their department is looking at options on how they can improve their situation. They have to make sure that the staff have adequate housing, and it's quite a process to go through, but we do look at options. We'll also be looking at a long-term planning process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister, in his last response, indicated that the Department of Health and Social Services was looking at other options.

Is he indicating that the department will find ways to get their own housing units for their staff, or is it something that again, is going to be outside of the staff housing that is supposed to be under the Housing Corporation? If that's the case, if they have their own units, does the Staff Housing Policy apply there as well? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Housing Corporation is going to be looking into this issue. They are reviewing ways of how they can improve the staff housing system, but the Housing Corporation is going to be responsible for doing all that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Oral Questions. Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Peterson.

Question 120 – 2(3): Yellowknife Boarding Home Inspections

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health. It concerns the Lena Pederson Boarding Home in Yellowknife. The boarding home down there serves the Kitikmeot patients who are sent out of our region for healthcare. The boarding home is about 20 years old.

This past January, late January, mould was discovered in the facility and it is a danger to patients staying there. I had a number of constituents come home and tell me about it, and then it was reported in yesterday's *News North*.

My question for the minister is; the mould was found during the week of January 25 and renovations began February 1, and it's quoted in the newspaper. My question for the minister: how often is the patient boarding home inspected for safety and health infractions such as mould? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you and welcome back to everyone. The boarding home in Yellowknife, yes, there was mould discovered under the stairs. Within a short time after that, the WCB was informed of that and precautions were taken to rectify the situation to address the mould in the building.

As far as I know, the facilities are inspected on an annual basis through the WCB process and as soon as the situation was discovered, the staff that managed the boarding home in Yellowknife contacted the WCB to put the plan of action in place to address the situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your first supplementary, Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that answer.

It seems to me that perhaps the boarding home facilities should be inspected more often, particularly when it comes to inspections such as mould. A question for the minister: what measures did the Government of Nunavut take to ensure patients were protected from the mould that was discovered? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The boarding home in Yellowknife is a contracted out service to a private company in Yellowknife. The responsibility of managing that facility falls on the contract we have with the organization in Yellowknife.

The boarding home, through the Government of the Northwest Territories, provided was they contacted the WCB responsible for that service when the mould was discovered in the facility. Because it is in the Northwest Territories, the proper agencies of that particular territory that inspect facilities, the health inspectors, the WCB inspectors, and what not were contacted to address the situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your second supplementary, Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister.

Could the minister perhaps outline what protective measures the owner of the building and the Government of the Northwest Territories are implementing to ensure that the mould doesn't occur again and endanger the patients from the Kitikmeot? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For any of the facilities that we operate, not just in Yellowknife, but boarding homes in Edmonton, Yellowknife, Winnipeg, Ottawa, the inspections of those facilities occur on a regular basis through the health inspectors, WCB, and so on. So on a regular basis, annually, those facilities are inspected. So those processes are already in place and will continue.

In terms of what happened in Yellowknife, I reviewed the situation. The process that was followed by the management team in Yellowknife was quick and as soon as the mould was discovered in the facility, the management of that facility responded and took the proper actions to rectify the situation.

So to answer the member's question, again, the inspections for those types of facilities occur on an annual basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister. I have no doubt that the operators of the facility responded appropriately once the mould was discovered. I'm sure that was good news to my constituents who were staying there, but they are concerned and they have been concerned for years with that facility. As I mentioned in my opening comments, that facility is 20 years old.

So my question for the minister, and if she can help me out here I can alleviate the concerns of my constituents back home who are patients of the boarding home: does the Government of Nunavut have any plans to build or construct or lease a new patient boarding home in Yellowknife to serve their patients from the Kitikmeot? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. My constituents also stay there, so I'm equally as concerned about the situation in Yellowknife. There are two more years remaining on that contract to lease the building.

At this point in time, the department is reviewing what options to pursue about the Yellowknife boarding home situation. We are going to be reviewing the file to determine whether, in fact, we need a bigger facility, smaller facility, or another renovation, whatever.

That whole process needs to take place. After we've had an opportunity to explore what our options are and what our needs are, we'll be moving forward on whatever decisions come out of that process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet North, Mr. Curley.

Question 121 – 2(3): Placement of International Nurses

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health and Social Services.

Last year, we were informed that the government was going to be recruiting nurses from overseas. Could the minister inform the House as to where these nurses who were recruited were placed? I believe they are called agency nurses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The international nurses that we've hired are placed in various communities. During the last sitting, I put a Minister's Statement out that outlined which communities or regions, I believe, they went to.

Right now, I can tell the member that some have gone to Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay, to Pangnirtung, to Iqaluit, and various communities. In terms of the exact list of those communities, I don't have that, but the individuals have been placed in various communities where there is a need for nurses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your first supplementary, Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are just a few nurses who have graduated from the Nursing Program, but there has to be a commitment on the part of the individual to complete their education. They worked extremely hard to complete their exams and if they don't complete or graduate within a year, then they have to do it over again. I believe there were 16 individuals who failed their Canadian exams.

What about those individuals who have failed their exams? What happened to them?
Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The individuals that come to Canada to work are required to take the exam before they can work. That is not just for international nurses, that's for any Canadian or international nurse that wants to be a nurse in Canada. They are required to take an exam through the Registered Nurses Association. The Registered Nurses Association administers the exam and the individuals writing those exams are given three opportunities to write the exam.

The individuals that did not pass their first go-around of the exam re-wrote their exam on February 10. So we're waiting for those responses and depending on the outcome of that, they will have one more opportunity to write the exam.

And I should clarify for the House that this procedure applies to any Canadian student nurse. If the Nunavut Arctic College students here graduate, they'll be writing the same exam and the same procedure would apply to those individuals. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your second supplementary, Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley: I wish to follow-up on that because Mr. Speaker, there was a concern with some of the nurses that are so heavily overloaded in these communities, taking care of the sick, as well as the public health requirements in small communities.

Unlike Iqaluit, they don't go through a certain review process and automatically get an increase. Nurses really do work hard, overloaded with the workload that they have.

In one particular community, it was reported that the nurses had to continue training the person that was hired from overseas; an Asian nurse.

I wonder if the minister could assure the nurses that the nurses that are in the communities are not there to train international nurses. Will the minister confirm that to the House?

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I recognize that our nurses provide essential services to our communities and they provide greatly needed services on a regular basis. The international nurses that have written the exam cannot practice independently until such time that they have passed the exam. So the nurses that are in the communities are not training the international nurses, but rather the international nurses waiting for the results of their exam must work in the shadow of a nurse who has a license to practice.

So, yes, I recognize the workload of the nurses, but these individuals cannot practice the full extent of providing the nursing care until the Registered Nurses Association confirms that they've passed the exam. During that phase those individuals work with the other nurses in the health centres and provide services with restricted responsibilities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Curley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the minister a final question. Are these international nurses that were hired, prior to completing their Canadian exam, currently on the Nunavut Government's payroll whether they have completed their exams or not?

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have hired an agency to hire these individuals to orient them to write the exam. Once the individuals are not able to pass the exam, the agency replaces those individuals, I believe until such time all those conditions are met, then they are put on payroll once they have passed the registered nurses exam. This is what I understand. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Akulliq, Mr. Mapsalak.

Question 122 – 2(3): Patient Escort Requirements

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the minister of Health and Social Services. I am sure that she isn't hearing this for the first time; I usually ask this question in regard to the patients.

Perhaps the minister can update us as to who makes the decision of whether the patient has to travel with an escort, or without an escort. Who makes that decision? Could the minister update us as to who makes the decision, and where is that individual who makes that decision? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The nurse in the community examining the patient will determine whether, in fact, the patient requires an escort or not based on a number of conditions. It's that practitioner that determines whether a person requires an escort or not.

Sometimes when there is no escort provided, there is also a process in place within the department where the patient can appeal that decision. That then is referred to a director who coordinates the review of all the files for appeals for escorts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your first supplementary, Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure that there are a lot of people out there who would like to get the knowledge as to who makes that decision, whether the patient is to travel with an escort or without.

The nurses state that they can't make a decision for an escort or not. So is it true that the head nurses in the communities are the ones that make the decisions on whether the patient requires an escort or not? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the point here is that the person examining the patient makes that decision based on the result of the examination. The nurse in charge is who decides whether that particular patient requires an escort or not based on a number of factors; whether the person is able to get on airplanes or not by themselves, whether there's a language requirement, whether the individual is a minor, a youth, a child, and so on.

There are a number of factors, it's not straight forward, if you are traveling you get an escort, there are factors that have to be all considered in deciding whether a person requires a travel escort. Those decisions are made by the nurse or the nurse in charge that's treating the patient. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your second supplementary, Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Do I have the understanding that if there's a patient who is a unilingual speaking person in Inuktitut, who can't speak English at all, whether the individual is a minor who is an Inuktitut unilingual speaking person, when this individual is being sent down to Winnipeg for treatment, if the head nurse says no for an escort, then the individual has to travel without an escort. Is that my understanding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not a straight forward yes answer to that because it all depends on the situation. It could be the age, it could be the disability, it could be the medical condition of that person at the time, and it could be because it's a child or a minor.

There are a lot of factors, but for the most part individuals traveling to the major centres, if they require the travel escort, then the decision is made by the person examining that patient. It's not a straight forward answer. It's on a case-by-case basis, depending on the condition of the patient.

Once a decision is made, there's also another mechanism in place for that patient to appeal the decision of a nurse. There's a central person within the Department of Health that examines all of those appeals to ensure that the policy is being applied consistently across Nunavut. The person reviews the file to determine whether the policy had been followed and all factors have been considered in making the decision to deny an escort. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to thank the minister for her response.

My final supplementary question, the new policy that you are working on, on travel escort policy, and I'm sure that this policy is going to be used, standardized as a whole, for Nunavut, when will this new policy be tabled? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The plan right now is to have that policy completed by April 1. I still have to bring it forward to Cabinet for approval, and at which time after it has been approved, the communication strategy will be established to communicate to Nunavummiut what the policy is and how it's applied.

In the past, there have been many concerns expressed around that policy and we are trying to address that in updating the policy. Not only that, but at the same time, we need to go out and inform Nunavummiut of what the policy is, how it's applied, and what the

intention is on having the escort policy in place for medical travel. So we hope to have that completed by April 1. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Kattuk.

Question 123 – 2(3): Research on Polar Bears Due to Climate Change

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under Members' Statements, I made a statement on climate change, and I would like to ask questions in regard to that.

We've been hearing about climate change for quite some time. I'm going to be asking very short questions, but first of all, I'll do a short preamble in regard to polar bears in Nunavut.

It's becoming more evident that polar bears are becoming more aggressive to humans, perhaps due to hunger. I'm not too sure why they keep attacking human beings, but the communities are the holders of environmental knowledge; I would like to ask a question in regard to that.

Research is done on polar bears in the communities. Is there going to be research done on how climate change is impacting polar bear behaviour? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for Environment, Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we'd worked extensively on this issue with the federal government when it was a Liberal Government.

We tried to review the agreement on how climate change could be dealt with. And also, our government was going to consult with the public-at-large to see how climate change has impacted our environment in the north, and also on our wildlife.

We have been and will continue to work closely on, and monitor climate change issues. I also attended a meeting in Montreal on climate change. There were delegates from the circumpolar countries, and we would like to be involved in that activity so that we can stay updated on climate change.

Speaker (interpretation): Your first supplementary, Mr. Kattuk.

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since the minister said they've been working hard on this issue, when are you going to inform the communities about whether the environment is being impacted by climate change? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akasuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we would like to work closely with the communities because the impact varies in each community.

His constituency is the most southern community in Nunavut and it becomes spring earliest and the snow doesn't set in as fast as in the High Arctic communities. So, the impacts on the communities vary, and for that reason, we would want to work closely with the communities, and let the communities work closely with the officials from the Department of Environment.

I'm sure that we'll have to work closely with them, and once our government has a clear understanding, then they will consult with the communities. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Your second supplementary, Mr. Kattuk.

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister stated that he would work closely with the communities.

Would the minister tell me when the research on polar bears can start at the local level? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Akasuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akasuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will be able to provide you with the dates sometime in the future. At this time, I don't have those dates right in front of me. So I would like to have a close working relationship with the Member for Tasiujaq/Hudson Bay as to how we can work closely with his constituency. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat, Mr. Alagalak.

Question 124 – 2(3): Update on Providing a Tracking System for Missing Hunters

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister responsible for Search and Rescue. Last year, I asked some questions in regard to search and rescue about using GPS locators. I wanted the department to purchase those locators so the hunters can make use of them; the hunters and people who go out on the boats.

My question is; I think that the department did something about that last year or the year before: what is the position of those locators at this time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for Transportation, Ms. Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will try to respond to the member's question.

In 2005-06, there was \$390,000 to be used for search and rescue, for instance, to purchase global positioning systems, GPS, and first aid kits, as well as HF radios. All those items were purchased for the communities in December of 2005. That is the response that I have at this time for the members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your first supplementary, Mr. Alagalak.

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not talking about those GPS and other items; first aid kits, and whatever. (interpretation ends) What I was talking about is last year, I was urging the department to purchase or identify some of the equipment that were available for tracking systems, tracking people, tracking whatever equipment and all that stuff that are available today. Those are the types of questions that I am pursuing at this time.

They seem to have been forgotten by this government. It was recognized last year how important it would be to have this equipment available in the communities in the event that the hunters need them, especially the parents who doubt their sons and daughters to make it back or make it from point A to point B. For example, if we had this equipment we wouldn't have lost those two people in Arviat last week.

That is the kind of question I pursue the minister to answer. What is the status of this proposal now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the question now. I will take the question as notice. I don't want to respond right away, I would like to research it. So I'll take the question as notice.

Speaker (interpretation): The minister said she will take the question as notice. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit Centre, Mr. Tootoo.

Question 125 – 2(3): Number of Vacant Units

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

I was asking questions earlier on the new positions that were recently announced here and the minister had indicated that they are working to try and make sure that people have adequate housing.

In our instance here in Iqaluit, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister if he is aware of what our vacancy rate is. How many vacant Government of Nunavut staff units do we have here in Iqaluit that aren't already allocated? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think we have any vacant units that are available, but we are working on leasing 40 units for this year to make sure that we accommodate some of the staff that need accommodation for their jobs.

As of right now, I don't have the number of how many vacant units we have. If we do, somebody probably already has that place. I do believe once it is done, we have people moving into those vacant units, if we do have vacant units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your first supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My guess would be that there are no unallocated units here in Iqaluit, except for the ones that are under construction. And those ones, like you said, are probably gone already.

Under this whole process of allocated staff houses, does the department keep track or have a waiting list, or a list of people that require staff housing, specifically here in Iqaluit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe we have a waiting list in our portfolio for housing. I can get back to the member on how many people are waiting. I don't have the list right now with me. I'll get back to him as soon as they get the numbers.

We're doing our very best to make sure that we have accommodations for our staff, not only here in Iqaluit, but all throughout Nunavut. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Your second supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to finding out how many that is, and then once we know how long the waiting list is now, we add those; I guess it's 26, or not of those new positions in the Department of Health that need units will get added onto that list as well.

Given that, how does the corporation determine, and I'm sure the waiting list is much longer than the units that are becoming available, how they prioritize who would get those units when any units become available? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As we all know, some of the job advertisements that we deal with say that housing is not available, but we do our very

best to make sure that we find people that already have places to stay or a house to live in.

Again, I guess we go on to the top of the list that have been waiting for a long time for the housing. We go back to the list and the priorities of the job that that person staffed, whatever position it is, if it's a priority for the government, we will probably have to accommodate that priority on the list. Thank you.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister. I believe he indicated that basically just whoever is on the list the longest gets the next place.

Given that, Mr. Speaker, and again, earlier he mentioned that there was a working group, I think is what he called it, that reviewed these situations when new people are coming on or getting added to the list.

My question to the minister is: given that most or all of the time that new positions are added on that is going to equal another staff housing unit, in most cases, that the corporation would be required to find or...is the department, or does the department give, or is it informed ahead of time prior to any decision being made so that if they will look where are we going to stick these people or this is our list and how do we address it? Is that something that the working group does? Do they determine...are they consulted prior to those positions being approved? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like I stated before that the staff of the Department of Health and Social Services is working with my department, the Housing Corporation. We will try and do our best to accommodate those individuals and to work with each department because employees are very important within our government and we try our very best to try and assist them as much as we can so we can have good people working for us. I know that there's a shortage of housing, but we are trying to do our best to accommodate them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Peterson.

Question 126 – 2(3): Tabling of 2004-05 Public Accounts

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. I was very glad to get his update on financial accounting because I noted that he is tabling the government's 2003-04 Public Accounts and that's 14 months, I think, after the statutory requirement.

I just want to point out that the GNWT and the Yukon have already tabled their 2004-05 Public Accounts.

So my question for the minister: can he tell the House when the Government of Nunavut will be tabling their 2004-05 Public Accounts that were due to be tabled by the end of December 31, 2005? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister for Finance, Minister Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I regret to inform the member that I can't state when that will happen. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your first supplementary, Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister indicated that there are a lot of initiatives underway to improve the delivery of the public accounts.

I recall the past two delays, two years ago, were due to the Arctic College year end not matching up with our year end. Last year, the delay was due to translations of the documents.

Can the minister give us an indication, today, of what he thinks is the major problem will be that causes a delay in producing the 2004-05 Public Accounts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Due to the accounting staff that are working on them, and they have to be translated again. Those are the same reasons that were stated earlier. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your second supplementary, Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that answer. The Auditor General indicated, and told us many times in our Standing Committee, and told us in her report that the Public Accounts are very important. Even the federal government tables theirs on time, and when a government doesn't table its Public Accounts on time, it doesn't help build our credibility and reputation around the country.

Mr. Speaker, we have been making these recommendations for several years to improve the Public Accounts process. There is really no improvement. I would like to know if the minister can tell us today who is in charge; and who has been in charge of implementing the proposed initiatives that he outlined in his Minister's Statement today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The deputy minister is the person that I will be working closely with to resolve those delays that we have. I will be working with the deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. The top initiative that the minister stated is underway is the recruitment of qualified staff that are required to fill vacancies.

Can the minister tell us today how many vacancies that we have today in the Department of Finance? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not exactly sure of how many vacant positions there are, but I could find out and let the member know. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for High Arctic, Mr. Barnabas.

Question 127 – 2(3): Federal Funding for Childcare Programs

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will direct my question to the Minister of Education.

Mr. Speaker, just recently, after the new government was elected, we now have the Progressive Conservatives as the new government. (interpretation ends) With the change of the government in Ottawa, how will this affect our childcare plans? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for Education, Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, let me say that change in the government in Ottawa was not well welcomed by some people and welcomed by others. Communication with Ottawa seems to have picked up in the last week. I know that the Premier has had a conversation with Mr. Prentice, who is the DIAND Minister.

Mr. Speaker, in regard to the Daycare Program, Mr. Dryden, as the members know, before Christmas, this House passed a motion supporting the Premier in Kelowna for negotiations on the daycare funding arrangement. It would seem that the new Conservative Government is moving very quickly to tear up that agreement that was signed off with the ten provinces. The three territories were not signatories to that agreement.

Mr. Speaker, we would move forward in accessing money that was put in place in a trust fund that we could draw down on. That's the direction that we would move in as a government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your first supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What is the minister going to be doing about the agreements when the PC Government is tearing up that agreement? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think, from the Nunavut perspective, we try very hard, and the other two territories and I had a conference call last week with Minister Dent and the minister from the Yukon on the three territories' position on the daycare programming dollars that were available.

The federal government that is coming in, the new government, they have the right to decide what program and services to run as a new government. In our case, when we look at the funding dollars that were available, we still, under Mr. Dryden's leadership, wanted to have the per capita funding, which was based on population, and then a base on top of that.

Mr. Harper's proposal of \$1,200 annually for families is a nice step, where you actually put money in the pockets of parents, but when you look at the amount of money that will come to Nunavut based on our cost of living and so on, it isn't very much.

I think it is safe to say that we would prefer the other arrangement based solely on the amount of money that would be transferred. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Your second supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and also to the minister.

It seems very likely that the PCs are going to be deleting some of the programs that were available before. It looks like the daycare funds will be a part of that. Are there going to be other funds coming in from the federal government? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Some of the new Cabinet Ministers that have been elected into the new government, Mr. Baird, Mr. Tony Clement, who I know very well, some of the other members that I have worked with as a territorial and as a provincial politician at that level, are in the federal cabinet. Last week, I wrote to several

of the different ministers, including the Minister of Defence, on some of the local issues here in our community.

Mr. Speaker, we have open communications with the new government. They are in place. We will try to work with them as a government. As I said earlier, the Premier has been in contact with the senior levels of the federal government, including a recent phone call with Mr. Prentice.

Mr. Speaker, we're in the process, myself, as minister, to invite Mr. Prentice and some of the other ministers, including Ms. Findlay, who is in charge of the daycare file, to Nunavut.

The programs themselves; the homeless money, for example, is a big issue for us. We want to make sure that the homeless money is forthcoming under the SCPI Fund, and that's another program that, right now, is still up in the air.

So the member is correct in that some of the programs may be cut by the federal government, but again, we have no control over that. What we need to do is bring forward the advocacy on behalf of Nunavummiut to the programs that are of interest to us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Question Period is now over. Going to the Orders of the Day. Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Mr. Clerk.

Item 8: Returns to Written Questions

Return to Written Questions 001 – 2(3), 002 – 2(3), 004 – 2(3), 005 – 2(3), 006 – 2(3), 007 – 2(3), 008 – 2(3), and 009 – 2(3)

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a response to Written Questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, that the members asked at the November 2005 sitting. Further Mr. Speaker; these responses will be part of the *Hansard* as an appendix. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Petitions. Item 11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Item 12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills. Item 13. Tabling of Documents.

Item 13: Tabled Documents

Tabled Document 068 – 2(3): Statutory Requirements for Tabling of Reports and Other Documents in the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut February 2006

Today I wish to table the Statutory Requirements for Tabling of Documents in the Legislative Assembly. This list is regularly updated by the Legislative Assembly and

tracks the status of legally required tabling requirements for government annual reports, financial statements, and other documents.

The current version of this document indicates what documents have been tabled as of February 21, 2006. I trust that all members will find this useful in monitoring the timely production and tabling of legally required documents in this House.

Tabling of Documents. Mr. Simailak.

Tabled Document 069 – 2(3): 2003-04 Public Accounts of Nunavut
Tabled Document 070 – 2(3): 2004-05 Interim Financial Report

Hon. David Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table the following documents: 2003-04 Public Accounts of Nunavut and the 2004-05 Interim Financial Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Tabling of Documents. Mr. Clerk.

Tabled Document 071 – 2(3): Response to Petition 01 – 2(3): GN Staff Housing Policy

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a response to Petition 001 – 2(3) on GN Staff Housing filed by the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Tabling of Documents.

Tabled Document 072 – 2(3): 2005 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

I wish to table, today, the 2005 Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut.

Tabling of Documents. Item 14. Notices of Motions. Item 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 16. Motions. Item 17. First Reading of Bills. Item 18. Second Reading of Bills. Item 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Item 20. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. Item 22. Orders of the Day. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A reminder; tomorrow morning a meeting of the regular caucus in the Tuktu Boardroom.

Orders of the Day for February 22:

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

Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): The meeting is adjourned for today and will reconvene February 22, 2006 at 1:30 in the afternoon.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 15:42*

