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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 Akesuk

(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)

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Keith Peterson

(Cambridge Bay)

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

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(Iqaluit East)

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(Arviat)

Regular Members' Caucus

Peter Kilabuk

(Pangnirtung)

Regular Members' Caucus

Steve Mapsalak

(Akulliq)

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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

Hon. Levinia Brown

(Rankin Inlet South-Whale Cove)

Deputy Premier; Minister of Community Government and Government Services

Patterk Netser

(Nanulik)

Deputy Speaker; Regular Members' Caucus

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Sergeant-at-Arms

Simanek Kilabuk

Hansard Production

Innirvik Support Services

Box 1200

Iqaluit, Nunavut, X0A 0H0

Tel (867) 975-5000 Fax (867) 975-5190 Toll-Free (877) 334-7266

Website: www.assembly.nu.ca

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Wednesday, February 22, 2006

Members Present:

Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Honourable Olayuk Akesuk, Mr. David Alagalak, Mr. James Arreak, 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, Honourable Louis Tapardjuk, Mr. Hunter Tootoo.

Item 1: Opening Prayer

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

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Good afternoon, Premier, Ministers, and Members of the Legislative Assembly. Item 2. Budget Address. Minister of Finance, Mr. Simailak.

Item 2: Budget Address

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's my honour and privilege to rise today to present the 2006-07 Budget for the Government of Nunavut.

(Interpretation ends) If there's one word that I could use to describe this year's budget, it is hope; hope that significant economic growth will bring jobs and opportunities to Nunavummiut; hope that with the right investments, we can create a better future for the people of Nunavut; and hope that we can achieve all of our visions for the future of our territory and for Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, Budget 2006 is designed to turn those hopes into reality, to capitalize on the opportunities ahead and to set up all of the agenda for Nunavut's future. Specifically, Budget 2006 promotes economic growth and positions Nunavut for investment, jobs, and opportunities. It invests in people, in helping communities, making sure Nunavummiut can participate fully in the potential that lies ahead for our territory. It protects our culture and our precious environment. It strengthens our commitment to sound financial management and responsible government. And it calls on the new federal government to take immediate action to address outstanding issues relating to territorial formula financing, devolution, and new arrangements for sharing revenues from Nunavut's resources.

Mr. Speaker, like all northerners, I listened carefully to Prime Minister Harper's comments on the eve of his election. He spoke directly about the potential in the North, that it is his commitment to help us achieve our dreams. That's a sign of hope for all of us in Nunavut and for people across Canada's North.

Along with Premier Okalik, Members of this Legislative Assembly, and Nunavummiut in communities across our territory, I am pleased to add my congratulations to Prime Minister Harper and his new government. And now I call on him and key members of his cabinet to begin immediately to follow through on his commitment to work with us and to help us achieve our dreams.

Under Premier Okalik's leadership, we are determined to do our part to capitalize on the opportunities ahead. We are determined to meet the goals and priorities of *Pinasuaqtavut*, fulfill the hopes and dreams of Nunavummiut, and position our territory for success in the future. And we are determined to pursue our goal of building a strong and self-reliant territory.

Work on fulfilling those dreams, on fulfilling our hopes for the future, moves forward with the Budget 2006.

Mr. Speaker, Budget 2006 confirms our commitment to fiscal responsibility and to investing our resources in critical areas that will create the best long-term benefits for people across our territory.

For Budget 2006, we will:

- spend \$873 million on delivering essential programs and services for Nunavummiut, an increase of 3.4 percent over 2005-06;
- we will invest \$103.5 million in key capital projects; and
- we expect to take in just over a billion dollars in total revenues, an increase of only 2.5 percent.

As a result, Budget 2006 forecasts an operating deficit of \$7.6 million for 2006-07.

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut faces a number of significant challenges. Addressing those challenges, but at the same time maintaining our commitment to fiscal responsibility, is a difficult balance. Tough choices have to be made. As it stands today, close to 82 percent of our revenues come from the federal government through territorial formula financing. As members of this Assembly understand only too well, in spite of the pressing and growing needs in Nunavut, the federal government imposed an arbitrary fixed limit of 3.5 percent growth in our funding. As a result we simply cannot afford to spend more without running an even greater deficit and putting our financial and economic future at risk. That is a risk we simply cannot afford to take.

Budget 2006 reflects the need to make wise choices - choices that will promote economic development, increase our investment in people, in healthy communities, and in essential infrastructure. As well, it reflects an investment that will preserve our culture, and position our territory for the future.

Our commitment to fiscal responsibility also extends to the operation of our government. Nunavummiut expect our government to be efficient. They expect us manage programs

effectively, to be open and accountable, and to make the best use of our available resources. As a government we are determined to meet those expectations.

This year we will follow through on a series of initiatives designed to modernize our management practices, strengthen the *Financial Administration Act*, and better define responsibilities and accountability for ministers and senior public servants. We will also improve the governance and transparency of crown corporations, and ensure that the essential information about the work of our government and the Legislative Assembly is available on a timely basis.

Maintaining a strong commitment to fiscal responsibility is the first step for an independent and sustainable future, but in order to capitalize on the opportunities ahead, our government needs to do its part to create a competitive business environment and to encourage investment in our territory. For too long, Nunavut's economy has been driven primarily by government spending. We see the impact of that in this year's budget.

Unless we take steps to reduce our dependence on government spending, we will forever be in the position where our future is in the hands of the federal government and not our own. That is not the kind of future that we want for our territory, and for future generations of Nunavummiut.

>>*Applause*

Nunavut's future lies in a more diversified economy, in developing long-term security and in creating a positive environment where business and industry see Nunavut as a good place to invest and do business. For that reason, our government will launch several important initiatives this year. First, our government will take critical steps to ensure a competitive tax environment and to promote economic development in Nunavut.

I am pleased to announce today that effective April 1, 2006 our government will establish a new Off Road Fuel Tax Rebate Program for the tourism, hunting and outfitting, fishing, and mining sectors.

>>*Applause*

The Off Road Fuel Tax Rebate will directly benefit our hunters and trappers. Small, seasonal fishermen and hunters will be able to see a direct impact to their bottom line. This initiative is essential to ensure that companies active in the exploration and development business see Nunavut as a sound business choice. We know that many parts of Canada are rich in both renewable and non-renewable natural resources.

Without a competitive tax environment and a rebate program like this, exploration and development companies can, and will, choose other places to invest. We cannot and we will not let that happen. We are determined to be competitive. We are determined to capitalize on the opportunities for economic growth for key sectors in our economy; not only exploration and development, but tourism, hunting and outfitting, fishing and

mining. We're determined to support economic growth that will benefit communities all across the territory.

Mr. Speaker, the Fuel Tax Rebate is positive news for key sectors of our economy, but the good news doesn't extend just to business and industry. Our government understands that high-energy costs affect not only business, and the potential for investment and growth in our economy. They also affect individual Nunavummiut.

One of the key ways of keeping our economy moving in the right direction and making sure we can attract and keep people in key jobs and professions is to leave more money in the pockets of Nunavummiut.

That is why I am pleased to announce today that the Nunavut Electricity Subsidy Program will be continued. This program offsets the cost of electricity for consumers and operators of small businesses. It is a visible sign of our commitment to ensure that affordable electricity is available to all Nunavummiut.

On top of that Mr. Speaker, Budget 2006 contains no increases in our current taxes.

>>Applause

Taken together these measures not only bring Nunavummiut in line with many other jurisdictions in Canada; they help solidify our position as one of the most progressive taxation regimes in the country.

The second step, Mr. Speaker, is to remove obstacles to business growth. That is an important strategic priority in the *Nunavut Economic Development Strategy*, and also *Pinasuaqtavut* and key steps will be taken this year to follow through on that commitment. Consistent with the *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* principal of *Qaniqtuurnut*, our government will work with the business community, with Inuit organizations, and our stakeholders to continually seek new ways to thrive. That includes identifying and removing barriers to business, removing unnecessary regulations, and enhancing business development programs.

Further Mr. Speaker, our government must take steps to capitalize on the enormous potential for mining in Nunavut. Mining and exploration hold tremendous potential and are vitally important to Nunavut's economic future, given it's an all time high for mineral exploration.

Earlier this year we saw the opening of Nunavut's first diamond mine, owned by the Tahera Corporation. Just a few short weeks ago the Jericho Diamond Mine began official production of Nunavut diamonds. On top of that, I look forward to the day when other potential mining projects, like Hope Bay, Meadowbank, and High Lake can begin operation.

To support increased mining activity the Department of Economic Development and Transportation will complete the development of a Nunavut Mineral and Mining Strategy. This new strategy will not only help build a strong and sustainable mining industry, but also ensure that our environment is protected.

Fourth, as part of the Northern Strategy, we are committed to opening up economic development opportunities in smaller, non-decentralized communities. This year, we will invest \$5 million from the Northern Strategy Trust Fund to develop and expand our economy, particularly in smaller communities.

Our \$4 million investment in the Strategic Investments Program will be maintained, allowing us to continue partnerships with federal funding programs, particularly the strategic investments in the Northern Economic Development Program. In addition, \$200,000 will also be provided this year to the Nunavut Regional Chambers of Commerce to promote business opportunities throughout the territory.

Fifth, Mr. Speaker, we will continue to move ahead on important initiatives to strengthen key sectors of our economy. Our goal is to build a strong and sustainable economy, reflecting not only our natural strengths and traditions as a society; but also preserving our environment for future generations. We share the increasing concerns about the impact of global warming on the arctic and will continue to take steps to address these issues in the longer term.

Led by Minister Akesuk, the Department of the Environment will continue to implement the Nunavut Fisheries Strategy, build a sustainable fishery, and take full advantage of the opportunities for a significant expansion of our offshore shrimp and turbot fisheries.

We will also promote tourism in Nunavut and launch a review of the *Travel and Tourism Act*. The Department of Economic Development and Transportation will proceed with the implementation of the Nunavut Arts and Crafts Strategy designed to improve access to materials and markets, expand education and training, and develop a Nunavut brand.

Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, this government will do its part to promote economic development and secure a stronger economic future for our territory. But just as important, Budget 2006 invests in Nunavummiut to make sure future generations can benefit fully from the opportunities ahead. That investment begins with our children. A good education is the greatest gift we can offer the young people of today. Not only do our children carry with them their own hopes and dreams, but the very future of Nunavut is in their hands. We owe it to our children to ensure that they have the education, the skills, and the abilities to prepare them for whatever their futures and the future of our territory might hold.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that this year's budget marks our largest ever investment in educating our people.

>>Applause

Funding for the Department of Education will increase to over \$204 million this year. That money will allow us to enhance programs for our youngest children through early learning and childcare programs.

We will proceed with the new strategy for teacher education. New graduation options will provide more flexibility for students, especially those looking to careers in the trades. We will investigate the development of more programs offered through distance education.

We will launch a review of our student financial assistance legislation. And we will move ahead with recommendations in the Adult Learning Strategy, particularly community-based initiatives and the development of a comprehensive literacy framework to meet the needs of Nunavummiut.

In 2006-07, we also will complete public consultations and move ahead with the new Nunavut *Education Act*, an Act that will reflect the needs and aspirations of Nunavut's people and Nunavut's vision for the future.

Mr. Speaker, our commitment to education does not end with a high school education. A well-trained labour force is critical to Nunavut's future; giving Nunavummiut the opportunities they need to build their futures right here in our territory. That's where the Nunavut's trade school will have such an important role to play. Just this past Friday, we announced that the new trades school would be located in Rankin Inlet. Working with our partners in industry and training, we are examining the appropriate mix of programs and facilities that will be needed to make this school a boon for all of Nunavut. Our government has committed \$5.5 million to the development of the trade school. We expect it to be opened in 2009. Minister Picco will also take steps this year to enhance pre-trades programs and increase our investment in Nunavut Arctic College.

Work will also begin this year on the Inuit Employment Plan. We are determined to meet the target of having at least 56 percent Inuit employment by 2009-10. When new jobs and new opportunities are created in Nunavut, we are going to make sure all Nunavut people have the skills they need to fill those positions and benefit from Nunavut's future growth.

A comprehensive human resource planning framework will be developed this year to help us meet the need for qualified people in a wide range of careers and professions. That includes planned recruitment as well as comprehensive training and development programs to be piloted into decentralized communities. New leadership and management programs will be developed and the *Sivuliqtiksatsat* Internship Program will be broadened to include paraprofessional and professional positions.

Taken together, these initiatives will give new hope to families and to future generations of Nunavummiut, hope that they can build their futures right here in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot invest in people without also investing in their communities, making sure they have adequate housing, and health and social service programs. In

healthcare we will improve access to essential healthcare services by following through on our 'Closer to Home' Strategy to strengthen community capacity, expand home care and continuing care programs, and expand the scope of services available in communities across the territory.

We will step up our commitment to train Nunavummiut for a wide range of healthcare positions, and a new 'Return to Service' Program will subsidize the tuition for Nunavummiut physiotherapists, social workers, dentists, and other health providers who return to Nunavut following graduation.

Combined with our investment in health professionals, we will build on investments in newly opened health centers in Cambridge Bay, and Rankin Inlet, and phase in new facilities in the near future.

Minister Aglukkaq will also take steps this year to develop a public healthcare strategy and step up our efforts to protect health, and not just treat people when they are injured or ill.

>> *Applause*

That includes a new initiative to support the *Isaksimagit Inuusirmit Katujjiqatigiit* Embrace Life Council, in their efforts to reduce suicide in Nunavut. As well, the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth has launched two pilot projects focused on Inuit societal values in Clyde River and Cambridge Bay with the support of the Inullariit Society in Igloolik.

In social services, we will provide an additional \$2.2 million in Budget 2006 to provide financial security to people in need, and to those who need help to become more self-reliant.

Of all the challenges that we face, make no mistake, solving problems related to our current housing shortage is at the top of our list. We cannot build healthy communities unless Nunavummiut have access to adequate, suitable, and affordable housing. We cannot attract professionals and businesses if there is nowhere for them to live. And, we cannot have healthy families and healthy individuals unless people can live in decent housing where they are not sharing substandard space with far too many family members.

We are determined to address this problem head on.

Last fall, Premier Okalik worked with his fellow First Ministers to reach an important agreement designed to address serious housing needs in Nunavut and other parts of the country.

With financial support from the federal government, and close cooperation from the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, we will be able to move forward on the 10-Year Inuit Housing Action Plan. I can assure Members of this Legislative Assembly that Premier

Okalik and our government will continue to make a strong case to the new federal government to encourage them to make the Kelowna commitment a reality.

During 2006, the Nunavut Housing Corporation will also continue its efforts to create more affordable housing for Nunavummiut. Ten communities will receive a new duplex, including Pond Inlet, Kimmirut, Gjoa Haven, Taloyoak, Cape Dorset, Coral Harbour, Qikiqtarjuaq, Baker Lake and Rankin Inlet. Two other communities- Resolute Bay and Kugaaruk- will see the final 20 units built under the Infrastructure Canada Initiative. Incremental staff housing units will be built in Whale Cove and Chesterfield Inlet.

>>*Applause*

Homeownership will continue to be a priority in 2006, with a special focus on new homeowners. Increased assistance with down payments will be available in most communities, and the New Material Assistance Program will be introduced to support new homeowners in building new homes.

Mr. Speaker, Minister Brown is committed to building strong communities and supporting economic growth. She is working hard to ensure that the necessary infrastructure is in place. Highlights of this year's commitment to communities and infrastructure initiatives include:

- Continuing additional funding to municipalities to offset increased energy and utility costs;
- Continued implementation of the Fire Protection Strategy to increase training and equipment, and to support community-based search and rescue organizations;
- Increased investment in the Community Access Road Program;
- Completion of negotiations with the federal government for the Safe Harbours Program;
- Upgrades to Nunavut airports;
- Major water and sewage treatment projects in Cape Dorset, Qikiqtarjuaq, Resolute Bay, Rankin Inlet, Kugaaruk, and Kugluktuk;
- Work on new Community Hall in Pond Inlet and Gjoa Haven; and
- Public consultation to help select a route for the Manitoba-Nunavut Highway.

Thanks to the federal government's Municipal Rural Infrastructure Program and the Gas Tax Program agreements reached last summer, we will invest an additional \$53.5 million in municipal infrastructure programs over the next five years.

As we seize the opportunities ahead, strengthen Nunavut's economy and communities, and invest in Nunavummiut, we cannot and will not compromise Nunavut's culture, heritage, and languages. It is what defines us as Nunavummiut, and is not only part of our past, it is key to our future.

This year the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth will invest over \$19 million to preserve Nunavut's culture, heritage, and languages. Minister Tapardjuk will

expand programs for both Sport Nunavut and Community Programs. This year's budget will provide close to \$5.5 million in grants and support to community-based initiatives, and it will support the development of new language legislation and strengthen Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun language programs and training.

In addition, our government will invest \$10 million from the Northern Strategy Trust Fund in the development of the new Nunavut Heritage Centre. The Heritage Centre moved one step closer to reality with the announcement last Friday that it will be built in Iqaluit. With the help of a trilateral working group, work will proceed this year on plans for this new centre to house Nunavut's invaluable artefacts and archives.

We will continue to work with our elders to strengthen their role in preserving Inuit values and using those values to address some of the pressing problems in our society.

Mr. Speaker, up to this point my focus has been what we will do as a government to build a better future for Nunavut and for people and communities across this territory.

Let me turn my attention now to our partnership with the federal government. We cannot escape the reality that the vast majority of our resources come from the federal government. We rely on them for territorial formula financing. We rely on them to support essential housing programs, build the necessary infrastructure in our communities, support healthy communities, and provide good education for our children.

That reliance is inevitable in the short term. We are a young territory faced with the enormous challenge of providing essential public service in spite of high costs, the vast expanse of territory with small, remote communities, the lowest mean income in Canada, and the highest unemployment levels in the country. No one can, or should, expect us to solve those challenges overnight.

But continuing to tie our future to the generosity of the federal government is not in the long-term best interests for our territory and Nunavummiut. We need to seize control of our own future and to turn our attention to the longer-term future; a future where we are self-reliant, and able to take control of our own destiny.

Today, Premier Okalik and our government are calling on Prime Minister Harper to work with us on three critical issues that will help set us on the path of greater independence. On an immediate basis, that means putting in place new Territorial Formula Financing arrangements and moving ahead on an urgent basis to reach a new agreement on devolution of responsibilities to our territory.

Let me address territorial formula financing first. This is by far our largest source of revenue. And along with the other two territories, we watched in dismay as the previous government introduced a new framework that totally failed to acknowledge or respond to the needs of our territory. During the election campaign, Prime Minister Harper agreed that the current arrangement needs to be reviewed. As I mentioned at the outset, we take this as a sign of hope that our views are being heard and our needs will be addressed.

In the simplest terms we are looking for a new deal with the federal government. That deal must include:

- separate agreements with each territory,
- no fixed envelope,
- consideration of Nunavut's population growth rate,
- an adequate gross expenditure base reflecting our unique needs and challenges,
- and assurance that increases in our own sources of revenue will not have a negative impact on our entitlement under Territorial Formula Financing.

In the past year, we have worked with the advisory panel established by the Council of the Federation. We have worked with the Expert Panel established by the former government. We are optimistic that our concerns have been heard. Now we are eager and ready to work with the new federal government with the new arrangements in place.

We urge the Prime Minister and Finance Minister Flaherty to make new Territorial Formula Financial arrangements a top priority as they develop their agenda for 2006. We urge them to release the report of the expert panel as soon as it is ready. We urge them to consider proposals in the report from the Council of the Federation. And we urge them not to wait until larger and more complex issues related to the fiscal imbalance and Canada's equalization program are addressed. Territorial Formula Financing is unique to the territories. The needs in the North, and especially in Nunavut, are vastly different from the provinces. And we urgently need new arrangements that acknowledge and address the serious challenges in Nunavut.

In the days and weeks ahead, I intend to take our case directly to Mr. Flaherty and I am optimistic we will be able to negotiate new arrangements before decisions are made about territorial formula financing for 2007-08.

The second issue is just as pressing, but certainly more complex. As I said at the outset, this budget is about hope and the best hope for our future lies in being able to capitalize and seeing the benefits of resource development in our territory.

In today's environment, the federal government is the prime beneficiary of resource development in Nunavut. That has to change. Inuit have used this land for centuries and will continue to use the land and assert Arctic Sovereignty. Nunavummiut should be the principal beneficiaries of Nunavut's natural resources. That's the position we start from. The next step is to begin negotiations with the new federal government on devolution agreements that will make that principle a reality.

Prime Minister Harper has said his party believes that Northerners should control their own future. He expressed his commitment to the orderly devolution of decision-making away from Ottawa. That commitment was echoed in even stronger words by Minister Jim Prentice, the new Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

We take those words as a positive sign that devolution is a real commitment and not just an idle promise because for us, Mr. Speaker, there's nothing more important than achieving a devolution agreement that allows Nunavut to benefit from the tremendous economic opportunities ahead. We are not talking about the simple administrative transfer. We are talking about strengthening our territory. We are talking about giving us more responsibility for our resources and allowing us to keep the revenues from resource developments right here in Nunavut. We are talking about giving us the opportunity to invest those resources in building a better future for our territory. And we are talking about creating the best hope our territory has for a more self-reliant, independent and prosperous future.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make a strong point that achieving devolution agreements for Nunavut is not only good for our territory - it's good for Canada because Canada can only be a strong country if each of its provinces and territories are able to develop their full capacity and diminish their reliance on federal transfers.

That's the case Newfoundland and Labrador made to the federal government. It's the case Nova Scotia made and Saskatchewan is now pursuing. In Nunavut, we expect nothing less than the ability to capitalize on our own potential for economic growth and realize the full benefits of resource developments within our own territory. We are ready to begin negotiations immediately. Nunavut Tunngavik will be actively engaged throughout the process.

Our government has created a new devolution branch, appointed a chief negotiator, and approved the negotiations mandate. We are counting on the federal government to take similar steps so negotiations can begin with a clear understanding of our respective goals and expectations.

Mr. Speaker, we know this will take time, but I have repeatedly talked about hope and our hope is that devolution negotiations will begin this spring and be concluded by the end of 2008.

Some Members: Hear, hear.

Hon. David Simailak: Our goals and our dreams for Nunavummiut are that by April 2011, we will be able to assume the responsibilities and the powers we need to take control of our own destiny.

>> *Applause*

The third issue involves reaching an agreement with the Federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs on an implementation contract for the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. The lack of an implementation contract has had a negative effect on Inuit training, institutions of public government, and Inuit organizations.

In May 2005, former Supreme Court of British Columbia Justice Thomas Berger was appointed as conciliator for the implementation contract negotiations. Our government looks forward to his final report and his advice on how to resolve outstanding issues.

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly, we have our work cut out for us. There's no doubt that we face difficult challenges in achieving the goals of *Pinasuaqtavut*. With your help and with the help of Inuit birthright organizations, businesses and industry leaders, volunteer groups, our elders, the federal government, and all of our dedicated public services, I have every confidence that we will tackle those challenges head-on and build a better future for Nunavut and Nunavummiut across this territory.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Premier Okalik for his confidence in me and for giving me the opportunity to present this budget and help shape the future of our territory.

I want to leave you all with my message of hope. I believe that hope is what the future of Nunavut is all about; hope that the potential for economic growth will create new opportunities for Nunavummiut and for our communities; hope that our investment in people will pay off for future generations of Nunavummiut; hope that together, we will build stronger and healthier communities and overcome some of the serious challenges we face today. And hope that this budget will help turn our dreams into a positive and prosperous future for our territory and for Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Simailak. Returning to the Orders of the Day. Item 3. Ministers' Statements. Item 4. Members' Statements. Mr. Peterson.

Item 4: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 108 – 2(3): Sixth Annual Kitikmeot Trade Show

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this month, Cambridge Bay hosted the Sixth Annual Kitikmeot Trade Show. I rise today to share with members some of the new initiatives that helped to make this year's trade show another great success.

Mr. Speaker, the Kitikmeot has vast economic potential in many sectors including; tourism, construction, mining, and renewable resources. Nunavut's first diamond mine, Tahera Corporation, is ushering in a sparkling future for the Kitikmeot.

Mr. Speaker, Kitikmeot entrepreneurs have been working hard over the past few years to develop business deals with companies in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and the provinces that will strengthen our economic base.

Sometimes it seems that these agreements are signed overnight, but it takes years of hard work to hammer out the details. The Kitikmeot Trade Show involves an ideal forum for that work to take place.

Mr. Speaker, this year, the Kitikmeot Trade Show added a new event. Organizers hosted a Transportation Panel that brought together representatives from the mining sector, northern airlines, the Nunavut Impact Review Board, and the Government of Nunavut to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, for three hours, a facilitator directed transportation related questions to the panel. This format also allowed for the audience to interact with members of the panel. They tackled such issues as the food mail contract, the NNI Policy, Road and Port Infrastructure, the paving of the runway at the Cambridge Bay airport, economic links to other jurisdictions.

A final report from the panel will be produced and distributed. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. Akesuk for attending as a keynote speaker. Mr. Speaker, it was also very good that delegates from the Baffin and Kivalliq Regions were able to attend.

They had valuable discussions with Kitikmeot businesses about establishing a Nunavut Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Speaker, we owe a great debt of gratitude to our high school students for allowing us to use their gym and other facilities for the booths.

Students enjoyed participating in the trade show, and asked intelligent questions at the booths. According to national statistics, 90 percent of jobs created every year are created by small businesses. And so, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the entrepreneurial spirit of these students was sparked by their participation at the trade show. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Member's Statement 109 – 2(3): Fishing Industry in Pangnirtung

Mr. Kilabuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today because of fisheries. It's very important in our community of Pangnirtung and this helps not just for the community, but also to the businesses in Pangnirtung and outside of Pangnirtung. When we talk about fishing, fisheries, I like to keep in mind about the fishermen in Pangnirtung because it is their livelihood.

They've tried requesting compensation and they want to be hopeful because they have a business, and I was very glad to hear that there will be more funding for fisheries. I am very hopeful.

Mr. Speaker, up to today, the fishermen in Pangnirtung have been handed obstacles over and over again. It's because of the storms, and they lose their equipment and they haven't heard any positive replies up to now. But this definitely has to change because they are issued licenses from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans so they can fish. They are not given by the hamlet. They are not a business, or even by the government here.

They're not told: you have a license because you have a business. They are issued a license from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the fishing industry helps families in the community and the fishing season is open now. They will be starting to fish pretty soon.

The government says that there is such compensation available for natural disasters, such as; storms...

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, hopefully the storms and natural disasters by the Department of Environment can be prevented, and turned into calming sunrises we can all look forward to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Member's Statement 110 – 2(3): Two Snakes Kept in School in Coral Harbour

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to make a Members' Statement that might seem like a minor matter, but which I think is really about an important principle.

My members' statement concerns two snakes, which are kept in the school in my home community of Coral Harbour. These snakes apparently are pets of one of the teachers from our school. For some reason, this particular teacher does not want to keep his pet snakes at home; instead the snakes are kept in the school. Parents have told me that these snakes have a strong odour and attract flies.

We also don't like to see our children being encouraged to kill lemmings and snow buntings to feed these snakes. It is not an animal that is found in our land, so when the District Education Authority had held a public meeting in my community and invited members of the public to express their concern about the school as a parent, and as an elected Member of the Legislative Assembly, I have expressed my concerns about the snakes and gave the reasons why they shouldn't be there.

After some discussion, the DEA agreed with my concern and later passed a motion asking the snakes to be removed from the school. The next day, without informing the DEA, the principal called a staff meeting to discuss the DEA recommendations. He then said that the concern was expressed by one man; that no parents had complained and there was no health concern. The principal then informed his staff that the DEA motion would be disregarded and the snakes would remain in the school.

I am not just one man; I am an elected representative of Coral Harbour, and I have a mandate to represent the views of my community. On top of that my concerns were accepted by the elected members of the Coral Harbour DEA.

Mr. Speaker, when I began this Members' Statement, I said that this was about an important principle. The principle is that persons elected to represent the views of the community on the local school, administration should be respected. The principle is that the District Education Authority should have some real authority, but in our community it seems that a school principal, who has been an education leader...

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to finish 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. Netser, you could proceed.

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

But in our community it seems that a school principal, who has been the education leader in my community for less than one year, has the idea that his authority and opinion about even something as minor as whether a snake should be in our school, are more important than the respectfully expressed concerns of the elected members of the elected District Education Authority.

Mr. Speaker, was this why we got Nunavut so that principals could come into our communities and dictate the opinions of the elected people? I hope not.

I am a bit concerned about the snakes but I am more concerned about what this says about who is in charge of our local schools. As we develop a new *Education Act* for Nunavut, I will be looking for real authority to be given to the communities and regions to oversee education programs in our schools. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

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

Member's Statement 111 – 2(3): Opening of Tahiuktit Society in Kugluktuk

Mr. Evyagotailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to announce the opening of a facility in Kugluktuk. (interpretation ends) The Tahiuktit Society has held its grand opening early this month. I was joined by Premier Okalik, Minister Tapardjuk, and Minister Picco for this important occasion. I was honoured to be a part of that important event.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen that the most successful initiatives to address community needs are those that have grown from within the community itself; the community members taking the lead in supporting their neighbours and friends.

Mr. Speaker, the Tahiuqtit Society is a wonderful example of just such as initiatives. I look forward to seeking a positive result within our community and also as a model for all communities to follow.

I would like to recognize the hard work and commitments of this society's members: Millie Kuliktana, Joanne Taptuna, Grayson Adamache, David Kaosoni, Lucy Nivingalok, Margaret Joy, Richard Herrington, Ryan Nivingalok, and Jeanie Burks.

Mr. Speaker, I ask Members of this House to join me in congratulating those individuals on their hard work. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Member's Statement 112 – 2(3): APTN Refusal to Televisе Proceedings in the House

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today, I would like to rise and discuss an issue that I have raised here before in the House and that's something that myself and my other two colleagues from Iqaluit can do and that is say hi to our constituents on television.

As all members know, APTN has refused to agree with our Legislative Assembly and with you, Mr. Speaker, in allowing our proceedings to be televised in the evenings when people would be at home to watch them. I think it's shameful.

At that time when I spoke about it, I asked them to remember their roots, where they came from. It's for northern TV out of the Yukon, for the north, not for an audience in the south that have all kinds of cable opportunities and other ways and means to watch their elected representatives do their work for them. And that's something that I'm very sorry that the rest of my colleagues here in this building are not able to do thanks to...how I look at it; total lack of respect for the people of the north by APTN.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask all members to continue to support yourself and the other two jurisdictions in doing everything we can to try and get APTN to wake up and smell the coffee and realize that people in the north are not at home in the afternoon, they are at work when these proceedings are going...when they want them to be televised is in the afternoon when no one's going to watch them.

As we all know as members, over the last couple of years and the last six years that the proceedings here in Iqaluit, when they are on, are something that probably get higher ratings than the Olympics right now, the Olympics of a different kind.

So I encourage you and all members to write letters, ask your constituents to write letters of disgust, I guess you could say, to APTN to change their way of thinking. And with that, Mr. Speaker, I thank you and I would also like to say hello to Brian. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Member's Statement 113 – 2(3): Complaints about APTN

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am also concerned about this issue with the communities of Igloolik and Hall Beach; there were a number of complaints about the proceedings not being televised in my riding and in Nunavut in general.

We have stated repeatedly that we wanted to be more open and more visible to the people of Nunavut, but at this time, with APTN refusing to come to an agreement with us, this is a setback on what we've been trying to do in Nunavut since its inception.

When you see the proceedings on TV, it gives you the desire to participate in the political arena. Mr. Speaker, I would like to urge and give direction to your staff on what we can do about this problem. Nunavut has to be a fair participant. We are aboriginal people. We live in an extremely harsh climate, and they have to include us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement 114 – 2(3): Thank Mother for Kamiks

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my mother in Baker Lake who made the pair of *Kamiks* that I wore during the budget address. Thank you. She is 74 years old and she still sews. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Members' Statements. Mr. Arreak.

Member's Statement 115 – 2(3): Congratulate Mr. Harper

Mr. Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am extremely pleased to be back here again. I couldn't be at the meeting yesterday due to weather problems.

I would like to congratulate Mr. Harper, our new Prime Minister, and I look forward to him keeping his promises, but it seems that they are putting a priority on something that we didn't place as a priority, like placing the military up here, and the military being more visible up here.

Our priority is increasing the number of houses. They are two or three nuclear families living in one house at this time. There is the issue of housing, and also education. Those are our priorities. Our children, as we say, are our future.

They need adequate education, and resources in Nunavut. There is also the issue of health and healthcare. In our community, if we get sick, the doctor is a few hundred miles away, and the sick person has to wait at least four hours if they catch a flight to come down here to see the physician.

In the Kelowna Agreement, where I would like the new government to be aware of our priorities, and to put in the back burner the military presence for example. Our priorities have to be recognized by the new government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement 116 – 2(3): Senior Support Programs

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about our seniors and also would like to say thank you to the Minister of Finance for his budget address. I know that the contents are going to support or help the seniors a lot.

Mr. Speaker, he mentioned to work with the seniors and to work with them on culture to help us in facing our challenges. First of all, elders, I can tell you, are facing many challenges by trying to survive, by trying to make ends meet, and sometimes they can't even pay for their fuel.

A couple of years ago, we had to help an Iqaluit resident in Rankin Inlet because this individual wasn't able to pay for the fuel. We had to send them money. I was told: you cannot send her money because she owes lots of money for fuel. So that was quite surprising for me.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to talk about the government's Income Support Program, and the Seniors' Energy Support Program. How many elders have applied for it? I don't think the elders know about this support program.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that the Minister responsible for Income Support probably can amend the program. Looking at the information here, it's even harder to fill out than income tax forms.

Individuals who are at the age 60 need their birth certificate, their social insurance card, their healthcare card, and their previous year's income tax, and their family members' income, and old age security income. Documentation has to be included. These are not the only documents that they need; they also need to bring in their mortgage documents.

Mr. Speaker, these are the barriers that we face. Like my colleague stated, perhaps the Cabinet is now setting up barriers and obstacles for Nunavummiut. I would like to hear

the response on that because Nunavummiut are very interested in hearing that response. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement 117 – 2(3): Firearms Certificate Application Forms

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to congratulate our Minister of Finance for his budget address.

I rise today Mr. Speaker...when I visited my constituency communities, I was told that there are some unfinished issues, for example, especially the Firearms Acquisition Certificate. The hunters, when they don't have a Firearms Acquisition Certificate, cannot purchase ammunition.

This has a negative impact on our hunters. It's very difficult to try and complete the application for a Firearms Acquisition Certificate. Perhaps you have a person servicing the people in the larger centres, but in the smaller communities we don't have that service.

Perhaps our constituents have to come to the Firearms Acquisition Certificate office when they come here for medical purposes because it's very hard to come here, and I know that it's going to be very expensive to deal with this issue, but all our community constituency members cannot come all to Iqaluit as long as they're healthy, or as long as we are not coming here for business purposes.

For that reason, this has had a very negative impact in our community for harvesters, and also to their family members because the hunter has to harvest game to support his family.

For that reason Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Premier about that at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Item 5. Returns to Oral Questions. Ms. Aglukkaq.

Item 5: Returns to Oral Questions

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

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to clarify a response that I provided yesterday to the Member for Rankin Inlet, Mr. Curley.

In his last supplementary question, he asked whether the international nurses are on payroll. In looking further into the issue, the international nurses are on payroll upon accepting the job offered to them. So therefore, during the time that they are on payroll,

they write their exam and receive their orientation to the Government of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Item 5. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 6. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Curley.

Item 6: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge an individual from my constituency. We rarely get the opportunity to acknowledge them, but we do have two individuals from my constituency.

First of all, Nauja Williams, let me introduce her as she is the Regional Maternal Newborn Health and Social Services Coordinator. She has been working there for quite some time and they really enjoy her working over there. She is very approachable. Everybody would like to talk with her.

Beside her is the Midwifery Consultant, Kirsten Garfield, I hope I said your name right.

So they work very hard and they are here to give support. Please welcome these individuals. Nauja is originally from our original community, which is Coral Harbour. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Welcome to the Gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to recognize a person in the Gallery today; Eruk Pauloosie, who is sitting behind Keith Peterson. Eruk Pauloosie is my brother-in-law from Gjoa Haven. This is the first time I have seen him here. So welcome to the Gallery. Welcome to Iqaluit.

At the same time, I would also like to recognize employees from Health and Social Services that are here with us today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My wife is here. Although I acknowledged her yesterday, I would like to welcome her to the Gallery.

There are some individuals from Baker Lake. I am very pleased to acknowledge Stephen Niego, and he is from Baker Lake. For many years he has been a heavy equipment operator at the Hamlet and also President of the QDC. He's got two sons who are going

to be in the Arctic Winter Games for basketball in Alaska. They are now practicing in Ottawa.

Also an individual from Baker Lake, right behind me, Lori Morina, who is in charge of Social Services. Also David Nanauq, Nick Qingaquuqtuq, and Hugh Tunnuq. David and Nick have been working for the Housing Association for many years. Hugh has been here for many years. Thank you.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not very often that I get to stand and recognize some visitors from my riding being such a far place away. It is my honour today to recognize three ladies from my riding of Cambridge Bay.

The first lady that I would like to recognize is the Mayor, Michelle Gillis. Michelle was recently elected as Mayor of Cambridge Bay in December. I'm sure that all of the ministers will be extending the same courtesy to her that they extend to me when I come asking for help, which I am sure she will be calling on you.

The second lady I have recognized previously, she's a very busy lady, Wendy Avalak. She's over here on other business. She's very involved in community and territorial-type work. So welcome to Wendy.

And the third lady is Margo Neglak. It's the first time Margo has been to the House. I would like to extend a very warm welcome to the three ladies to the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut. Welcome.

>> *Applause*

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

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Good afternoon. There's an individual from my constituency also. My two communities are quite close to each other and this individual has worked in our schools, Mukshowya Niviaqsi. I would like to acknowledge her. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Mr. Evyagotailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Keith Peterson had already mentioned, as he knows that my constituents are far away as we know. I would like to

recognize a constituent of mine. This individual has worked at the Housing Corporation for a long time, Lucy Maniyogena, welcome to the House.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Ms. Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Sometimes Tagak and I fight over our constituents to recognize someone that arrived here. I would like to acknowledge Tagak for giving me one individual to acknowledge. I would like to welcome this individual right behind me, Rory Wilkinson from Rankin Inlet. Welcome. Thank you.

>>*Applause*

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not very often that I get a chance to recognize...

>>*Laughter*

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's not very often that I get a chance to recognize one of Mr. Tootoo's relatives in the Gallery, but I would like to welcome to the Gallery a constituent of mine, well-known throughout the government circles and through Nunavut, our very first accountant, an ADM, Mr. Victor Tootoo, to the Gallery. 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. Unlike Ms. Brown and Mr. Curley, Mr. Picco and I usually work things out; we don't have to fight over who's going to introduce whom.

Mr. Speaker, sitting next to the individual that Mr. Picco recognized, who unfortunately shares the same disposition as the Premier, Minister Olayuk, and our Clerk as who they cheer for in hockey.

Sitting next to that individual, Mr. Speaker, is a constituent of mine, a well-known individual throughout the territory and throughout Iqaluit that does a lot of hard work on behalf of Canadian Airlines for Inuit that need help throughout the Baffin Region and the other regions and that's Ms. Eva Onalik. I would like to welcome her to the Gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Welcome to the Gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 7. Oral Questions. Mr. Kilabuk.

Item 7: Oral Questions

Question 128 – 2(3): Public Government that Serves All of the Nunavut Territory

>>Applause

Mr. Kilabuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been a few firsts for me in the last couple of days, this being one of them.

Mr. Speaker, as per my earlier statement about fisheries in Pangnirtung, and I'll admit, as part of my learning process, I'll start with simple questions which will hopefully lead to the higher level questions my colleagues on the floor have asked.

Mr. Speaker, my understanding of this government has been that, being a public government, it will provide the same level of service, and equal opportunities to all the people it serves in the Nunavut Territory.

This is not specified, this is not determined by race, or of any factor. Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for the Department of Environment. My understanding of this being a public government; is his understanding the same of the Department of Environment and also that of the minister? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are representing all the people of Nunavut. What we want to do is assist every resident in Nunavut as a government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kilabuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reason why I asked this question is because in having reviewed, and gotten information about the certain number of fishermen that have made applications for the Disaster Compensation Program, which are caused by either storms or natural disasters.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents over the last few years have run into this problem, and last year made applications to seek assistance for losses suffered.

Now, it appears there has been an oversight in the applications, because there is an outstanding application that was denied, and I hope it was not because of race, or a factor

which is not acceptable, and which has been confirmed by the minister already, that this is a public government serving all residents within the territory.

So is the minister prepared to review the application that has been denied as part of the overall package of applications that were reviewed in the last little while by his department? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will look into that application. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 129 – 2(3): Senior Fuel Subsidy Program

Mr. Curley (interpretation): My question is to the Minister responsible for Income Support.

First of all, I would like to say that the elders in Nunavut, when they put in an application, even to write an application, it's very, very difficult for those elders because they don't speak English and they don't have the knowledge of the various types of assistance that they can access.

The electrical support apparently can be given to individuals living in zone one at the age of 65 or over and if they meet the minimum requirements, the assistance that they receive, would you be able to make more clear so that it's more understandable in Inuktitut than English? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Senior Fuel Subsidy Program, as the member indicated, is a Nunavut-wide program.

I would agree with the member that if there is an issue with the forms that are being used that it's, on behalf of the government we would have to make sure they are better distributed and make them more comprehensible. So in that case Mr. Speaker, the majority of our income support workers, who are available to do these forms, are Inuk and do speak Inuktitut as their first language and we will work with customers and clients to make sure that these forms are easily understood and easily translated.

Mr. Speaker, I should say and add that the senior subsidy program for fuel is one of the better programs by the government and it was reviewed in 2003 and there are different zones for fuel and the amount of subsidy available based on the community that the person lives in. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Curley: First time that it may have been recently reviewed, but it's still full...it's so complex. All the revenues within that household are subject to claw backs, and therefore, if they see the list that are stated in zone one and two, in effect, they will likely will not be qualified because most times they are really never sure exactly who the permanent residents are in that house.

So in that case, could the minister undertake to review all these conditions that are in that Fuel Subsidy Program for the elders maybe provide it more simplified support, a genuine support, whether it's a support that it seems to be fine, but when you get down to meeting all the conditions listed, here it's worse than the tax form because you also have to provide titles, deeds, or mortgage documents for instance, as well as income tax returns from previous years.

So Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister once again that he would provide more support to the people of Nunavut who desperately need help; our elders. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister, Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is correct where there are several criteria for the senior fuel subsidy program. The first criterion is that the senior actually owns their own home. So in our case Mr. Speaker, almost 80 percent of Nunavut residents are actually in social housing and they wouldn't qualify for the program.

For the people that do qualify for the program, last year, I believe on the numbers that are available to me, that were only 46 Nunavummiut, who are elder and seniors, and own their own homes, and are eligible for the program. At the same time, they had to be above the age of 60, as the member has pointed out, they had to be a private homeowner, and the total household income is verified based on the income support amounts.

So Mr. Speaker, I would agree with the member that the more access to the program may be warranted and to help the member and constituents at large across Nunavut be able to have an update on this program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Curley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have one last question with respect to that. The application is so complex that I have one constituent who applied more than a month ago and he has yet to hear whether his application is going to be approved or rejected.

Could the minister tell us why it is so complicated? Why not just have one day of consultation with the member and provide an answer of whether or not they qualify? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Picco

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would agree with the member that the waiting for two months or something to receive support under the program is too long. I don't know the particular case the member is speaking about of course, but I can say the turn around time is usually a lot quicker than that.

Mr. Speaker, we can look at the program itself and see where we can make improvements. And again Mr. Speaker, when you are trying to pay the high cost of home heating fuel, it's an extra burden, especially on our elders. And, Mr. Speaker, we will try to speed up the process that the member has mentioned.

At the same time, the constituent in question that the member is talking about, if he would provide the information to me with the member's name and so on so that I could follow-up immediately and see what the delay is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Curley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly will do that, but I just want to let the minister know that I'm dealing with a constituent who is over 80 years old. So we are not talking about whether this is marginally qualified or not. This is a very elderly man and very serious in getting, whether or not he could be receiving the support from this government. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, Mr. Speaker, if the member would provide that information to me as soon as the House breaks, then I will be able to follow-up and hopefully help the elder.

Again, Mr. Speaker, this is a good program and by way with the House right now, if there are elders out there who are over the age of 60, who own their own home, and have not accessed this program before, they can see their income support worker to make sure they receive the correct information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 130 – 2(3): Management of Medical Travel

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

Mr. Speaker, the department's 'Closer to Home' Strategy aims at reducing medical travel costs by providing more services here in Nunavut. However, it's a fact that patients from Nunavut's smaller communities still have to travel to regional centres to receive services.

Can the Minister of Health and Social Services clarify, for this House, what departmental organizations have currently in place to coordinate and manage patient medical travel in the Baffin Region? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Health and Social Services provides medical travel assistance to patients requiring care outside of their community and that program is administered by the three regional centres; one in Cambridge Bay, one in Rankin Inlet, and here in Pangnirtung.

The nurse in each community that examines the patients determines whether a person requires care outside their community. And once that has been determined, the department makes the appropriate arrangements to send the patient to see a doctor or a specialist. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Barnabas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister clarify, for this House, where the person that administers medical travel for the Baffin Region is located? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the past, medical travel was done within the hospital in Iqaluit for the Baffin. Recently, that function has been transferred to the Pangnirtung Regional Health and Social Services Office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Barnabas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister confirm, for me and to my colleagues, whether the patients traveling to receive medical care in the regional centres are required to make their own accommodation arrangements? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For any patient traveling outside of Nunavut, for the most part, those patients stay in the boarding homes whether it's in Iqaluit, Ottawa, or Winnipeg, or Edmonton, or Yellowknife, but there's also a difference in that that Government of Nunavut employees stay in hotels. Sometimes those are arranged by individuals themselves or by the department. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Recently, in fact, this week there are a lot of people in Iqaluit and there is a very bad shortage of hotel rooms. Since this has been transferred to Pangnirtung there are a lot of difficulties now, especially for my constituents and other communities.

What I would like to ask is that I know it has been done and they have spent money for those people going on medical travel. They have looked for hotel rooms. This has been brought up with me quite a number of times. (interpretation ends) Will the minister agree to consider compensating patients for their long-distance phone calls and other costs of arranging their own accommodations while they were traveling in order to receive medical services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would have to get the details from the member in terms of who the individuals were, and what problems were encountered before I can commit to any of that. So if the member can provide to me the names of those individuals that experienced travel problems, I will look into it and decide from there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 131 – 2(3): Wait Time Benchmarks

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services.

On December 15, 2005, the provinces and territories across Canada announced common goals for the provision of health services. They did this by establishing benchmarks for wait times for services such as cancer screening treatments, knee replacements, cataract removal surgery, and others.

My question for the minister is: can the minister clarify, for the House and for the public at large, how these wait time benchmarks will affect service delivery for Nunavut residents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. The wait times that are established were established through the FMM process in the categories. Right now, the majority of those services identified as areas to focus in establishing the benchmarks, the majority of those services are offered out-of-territory for Nunavummiut patients, as an example, cancer treatments. Those treatments are offered in Ontario and so the initiatives of Ontario to minimize the wait time would be our wait time.

I think to explain, we have our own issues of areas where we want to concentrate on identifying and reducing wait times. Those particular areas that were identified at the national meetings, those wait times are in each jurisdiction; Ontario, Manitoba, or Edmonton. The majority of those services are provided by those health hospital services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that response. I recently had a conversation with one of my constituents who waited 13 months for surgery and the surgery took one hour. For those 13 months she had to give up her job. She had a lot of discomfort and some other issues. I am sure that is something that we don't want to see happen too often up in Nunavut.

My question for the minister is: what assurances can the minister provide to Nunavut residents that they will not have to wait any longer to receive health services than the wait times established on December 15, 2005? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue on wait times is a bit different in Nunavut than in most provinces and in the territories.

The Nunavut health system does not directly provide the services that were identified at the FMM, so the effort of each of the jurisdictions to reducing the wait times in those five categories, we support those initiatives of those provinces.

The result of those efforts by each province will benefit Nunavummiut in receiving those services identified as priority areas at the FMM. So their efforts will continue to support and in the end those would then essentially improve the wait times for Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Can the minister explain what plans are in place to improve the ability of Nunavut's health service providers to meet the established wait times established on December 15, 2005? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I need to clarify again, the five areas that were identified as priorities for wait times; those services are not provided in Nunavut today.

So the efforts of the jurisdictions that provide the services, and the jurisdictions where we use their services to provide that service, their efforts we continue to support. Each jurisdiction has identified their benchmarks in trying to address the wait times, so their efforts are our efforts in trying to minimize the wait time.

In Nunavut, we are looking at other areas that impact our own citizens in different areas, because our wait times could be different from other jurisdictions, but those areas identified in December, services are provided out-of-territory, as it is right now; Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Edmonton. So their efforts are ours. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister inform the House; how many Nunavut residents are currently waiting for hip or knee replacement? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can provide that information to the member. I don't have that information here with me. I will commit to providing it to the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Nanulik, Mr. Netser.

Question 132 – 2(3): Status of the Nursing Recruitment Program

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will not be directing my questions to the minister responsible for snakes today, but....

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services. I would like to follow up on an issue raised yesterday by my colleague from Rankin Inlet North.

Can the minister update this House on the current status of the Nursing Recruitment Program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a week ago, the third intake of the international nurses, the orientation started.

Before December, a number of other orientations were taking place and international nurses were also preparing to write their exams for February 10. Those individuals have written their exams. We are waiting for the results to come back from the Registered Nurses Association on the outcome of those.

The other efforts that are involved, that we're undertaking in the Department of Health, is to support the Nursing Program that's currently being offered through Nunavut Arctic College. As it is right now, I believe there are about 26 Nunavummiut that are participating in that program.

So not only in the area of recruitment are we trying to address the shortage of nurses, but also through training. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We understand that the government spent a significant amount of money on these recruitments. Can the minister update the House on what will happen if there are failures to pass the second attempt? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The national exam that is written by any person that graduates from a nursing program is administered through the Registered Nurses Association. The guidelines that they have are that an individual who writes that exam can write the exam up to three times.

In the case with our own staff, whether it be international nurses or our graduates of the Nunavut Arctic College, that same policy applies to those individuals.

In the case of our recruitment efforts with the international nurses, if the individual does not pass their third exam, the agency that we hired to assist us with the international recruitment efforts will then find a person, at their cost, to replace the person that was not able to succeed in writing their third RN exam. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Interesting... Originally, 100 nurses were to be hired through the department's Nursing Recruitment Strategy. When does the minister expect to meet this goal? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In December, I updated the House that we have made approximately 50 offers. The process is to try and get those individuals

into the positions; it takes a bit of time because we have to then go through the immigration process and so on.

We are working, right now, to, as we do our recruitments of these individuals; we are also evaluating how well we are doing. I have also had further discussions with my staff on trying to also include more efforts in recruiting within Canada.

There is a national shortage of nurses at this point in time. I believe last year, in Canada, only 4,000 nurses graduated in the entire country. So there is a demand placed and there is a need for nurses.

We are looking at our options to recruit internationally as well as within Canada, but at this point in time, the efforts will be continued to fill the vacancies that we have and we will have a better idea, in terms of the timeline, of when we will be able to fill all of the vacancies within the year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question is: those nurses that have failed the entrance exams; are they in smaller communities such as the places that are non-decentralized? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I need to clarify. Any nurse that graduates from any nursing program to work in Canada has to write a Registered Nurse Association exam and that's not an entrance exam. In order to practice nursing in Canada, every nurse has to write this exam, whether you are a Canadian or an immigrant to the country and Nunavut Arctic College students in Iqaluit will be writing the same exam.

So it's a Registered Nurse Association exam and we are required by law to have all of our employees that are nurses to pass that exam before they can work. The individual nurses that we have hired are placed where there are vacancies and it's in a number of communities; it could be in non-decentralized communities and in centres like Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, or Cambridge Bay. So it's a combination of both. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 133 – 2(3): Baffin Regional Hospital Accreditation Report

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, just over a month ago, the minister announced some major changes at the Baffin Regional Hospital. This announcement came after the hospital lost its accreditation status on December 31, 2005.

It's the first time in 16 years that it has not passed the accreditation evaluation. Mr. Speaker, in the press release, it indicated that there were four evaluation exercises. The first being the review of the outpatient clinic services, and the other one was an operational review, a risk management review, and a regional accreditation exercise.

Can the minister indicate when their department received the report findings for each of those reports? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The report for the accreditation of the hospital, I received that report December 14, back when I was in Gjoa Haven.

The other reports were initiated over the summer months and were all completed around the same time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is the minister indicating that they first became aware of the problems at the Baffin Regional Hospital in December?

I'd like to ask the minister then if she would be willing to commit to tabling copies of each of those four reports and the results for the accreditation evaluation here in the Legislative Assembly, and, if she were not willing to do that, why she wouldn't be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Mr. Speaker, the Accreditation Report was completed on December 14, and I can table...the document itself is quite lengthy.

I'm prepared to share that information. I have to get the information all translated and in the interim I can provide a summary of that report to the members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the media release, or press release that was issued by the department, it was indicated that these reviews at the hospital were identified, starting in August 2004.

Is the minister saying that they just received the results of the August 2004 report in December? I would assume that as issues arose through the evaluation exercise they would have been conveyed to the departmental officials.

So I guess I'd like to ask the minister if she can tell the members of this House when the plan was developed to address some of those issues that were identified even as early as August 2004, or did they wait until just this past December to develop an action plan to try and address those issues, or was that something they started working on way back in 2004? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the Accreditation Report, the last accreditation review took place in 2002, and there were a number of recommendations that came out of that report. The next time the record accreditation was due was this year. What happened in 2004, I cannot speak to.

I've been in this portfolio since June. I found out about the Accreditation Report on December 14, at which time I then discussed the issues with my staff, and at that time, we developed a plan to move forward in addressing discrepancies that were identified in the Accreditation Report, which included a number of recommendations, particularly around the staffing shortage to manage the facility as a hospital here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Also in that press release last month, there was an indication that the department had approved \$2.3 million in new funding to address some of those discrepancies that were identified in the review.

Can the minister update this House on what changes have been implemented since that announcement with the \$2.3 million for new funding for the Baffin Regional Hospital? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Immediately after I became aware of the situation of the Baffin Regional Hospital accreditation recommendations and concerns, the whole process to initiate the areas of where the discrepancies may be in terms of funding was initiated.

The \$2.3 million will be in this coming budget, but from the fiscal year from January to March 31, an additional \$300,000 was identified. That would be geared towards filling the immediate staffing requirements.

Some of the changes that have taken place since I became involved with reviewing the recommendations of that file; I had a meeting with the senior management staff of the

hospital. That involved approximately 11 senior staff to start addressing the items that were identified in the Accreditation Report; not only that but we also had meetings with finance officials to move forward with incremental funding of \$2.3 million, which was approved and announced by the Finance Minister to support the shortage of funding for the hospital's needs.

Also since that time, the staff has been working hard to fill the positions. Some of those positions have been filled on a casual basis. More efforts are in place to start advertising for the positions.

Also since that time, I had a meeting with the regular members to discuss the recommendations from the Accreditation Report to ensure that they were able to ask questions of my staff and chief of staff back in, I believe it was January.

Those are the steps that have been taken. At the same time, there is a senior management working group at the hospital that meets weekly to address the recommendation outlined in the Accreditation Report. We are looking to address recommendations in 18 months, at which time we will be inviting the agency to come back and evaluate the hospital.

It is a voluntary process and I keep saying that because we want to participate in an accreditation review in order to measure our standards of service to other jurisdictions. Once we have given ourselves 18 months, we will be again asking for that review, again have the group provide the evaluation for us. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Uqurmiut, Mr. Arreak.

Question 134 – 2(3): Medical Transportation Office in Pangnirtung

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

The minister stated earlier that the patient transportation officer is now based in Pangnirtung. Is that going to be the case from now on? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back in 1999 when the Baffin Regional Health and Social Services was decentralized to Pangnirtung, that function was not part of that. It was a function that was carried out by the hospital.

We recently made the changes to have that function carried out in the Baffin Health and Social Services Operations, which is located in Pangnirtung. So that is where that will be delivered. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The patients in the Baffin region usually go down to Iqaluit to be treated for medical purposes.

There's a boarding home here in Iqaluit. I've been told that there are some patients who aren't going home on the day that they're supposed to because their airline tickets aren't ready.

And then the next day they're not able to go home again because nothing is ready. I think that this is going to be an ongoing problem if there is no transportation officer here in Iqaluit.

It's going to be an increase to the costs. Is it possible to get the transportation officer position back to Iqaluit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The change in providing the travel arrangements was recently moved from Iqaluit to Pangnirtung. There are some hiccups that we're trying to address in providing that change.

And, like anything, when there is a change, there is some confusion, and we are trying to address that through communicating with the boarding homes and so on. The change is to allow for the hospital here to focus on providing the service for medical arrangements between Iqaluit and Ottawa, and the Pangnirtung regional office to be providing the travel arrangements for any other community requiring travel to Iqaluit.

So, as it is right now, we plan to stick with the plan and to try to address the hiccups that we're experiencing in communicating a bit of that confusion. So, through any change, there are some hiccups, and we are trying to address those by communicating those changes to the service providers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister stated that there are a few hiccups, but if this is an ongoing hiccup...we fixed the problem when there was no problem at all.

I think that we're going to have hiccups if there is no repatriation of the position back to Iqaluit.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The change is also in support of decentralization of operations to Pangnirtung.

At the same time, I just responded to the Member Tootoo's question related to accreditation of the hospital. We are reviewing how and what services the hospital provides for services.

This is one of the areas that would allow the staff of the Baffin Hospital to focus on travel arrangements of patients from the hospital in Iqaluit to Ottawa, and the change will also allow the regional office that provides services to all the communities throughout the Baffin to make the travel arrangements for those individuals' travel to Iqaluit. And again, this is to try and improve the services that we're providing to the hospital, and this change will allow the Baffin Hospital to focus on providing the services of their patients from Iqaluit to Ottawa.

So the end result for that would be, again, better service to individuals traveling out of the Baffin Hospital to Ottawa. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want a response to my question.

How long is this review going to be? The minister responded totally differently. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Mr. Speaker, the process will continue to evaluate as the changes are made. We'll continue to try and communicate that and monitor the complaints that are coming through.

There have been some complaints raised, and there have been some errors in administration of travel. We recognize that, and the staff have been directed to address those as those issues are being raised by our patients.

But at the end of the day, I think one has to be very clear why we are making the change to Pangnirtung. And again, it's to allow the staff at the Baffin hospital to focus on providing the services for the patients at the hospital and to allow for the Regional Department of Health and Social Services Pangnirtung Office to provide that service to the communities' health centres for patient travel. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 135 – 2(3): Community Hall in Sanikiluaq

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Community and Government Services.

I'm very proud to have heard the budget address from the Minister of Finance. It seems like I am quite frustrated because not once was my constituency mentioned in the 2006-07 Budget Address. It seems like my constituency doesn't even exist. So I'm quite frustrated about that.

My question is to the Minister for Finance, as I have stated earlier on before, previously, that my community constituency, the community hall is too small and I know that he has seen our community hall. I would like to ask the minister: when was the last time you investigated the community hall in Sanikiluaq to make sure there's enough capacity for the whole community? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for Community and Government Services, Ms. Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for asking those questions too.

In regard to the community hall, the majority of communities in Nunavut are growing in population and the community halls are filled to capacity and some community halls are deteriorating due to age.

In regard to your question, I will review it first to see whether it's in the capital plans, then I will be getting back to you with a response of whether your facility is included in the capital plans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question was: when are we going to get our new community hall? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Ms. Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. According to my understanding, he is asking whether there's going to be an expansion in the community hall, but I would like to review the capital plans first before I respond to him. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. She already responded to the question. We just wanted to find out when there is a plan for expansion of our community hall, but since she already responded to the question that I was going to pose, I will be expecting her to review the capital estimates. We know when there's an expansion on our community hall because we are quite concerned now.

We have been saying that ever since Nunavut was created, we would like to establish good athletes. Sanikiluaq has never participated in the Arctic Winter Games. That's part of my frustration because our community is viewed as a non-existent community. I don't want to say that but the government is, I find the government is neglecting my community and I get quite frustrated about that. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): That was just a comment. Oral Questions. Member for the High Arctic, Mr. Barnabas.

Question 136 – 2(3): Firearms Certificate Application Forms

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My Member's Statement, I spoke to the Firearms Acquisition Certificate, so I would like to pose my question to the Premier in regard to that.

We are facing many difficulties with this. We don't have photographers, the photographers have to be certified, our original documents have to be sent out to apply for a Firearms Acquisition Certificate and they have to pay for it. Also, individuals who are trying to apply for Firearms Acquisition Certificate are unilingual Inuktitut speaking people and all the application forms are only in English.

So I know that we need services. I know that there's an assistance service provided for Firearms Acquisition Certificates in Iqaluit, but how are you going to provide support to the communities and to the other communities in Nunavut that need assistance? Are you going to provide assistance to the hunters because they can no longer afford to purchase ammunition since they don't have a Firearms Acquisition Certificate? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister responsible for Aboriginal Affairs, Mr. Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you. Perhaps remove the FAC (gun registry) and that way we can all work together. The Conservative Government stated during the campaign that they would like to remove this FAC Program. I had told them to go ahead and remove it. Thank you.

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

Mr. Barnabas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's evident now that these individuals had to send their applications out, they weren't allow to photocopy their identification because they had to send out their original identification cards and one of the individuals that had applied did not receive the original documents back. How are you going to deal with that individual? Can the minister ask the federal government to make sure that individual receives his original identification cards back? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Premier

Hon. Paul Okalik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I am quite concerned about that. I would like you to inform me in detail about your concerns so we can try and provide support and assistance to them. At 5:30 this afternoon, the Federal Minister of Justice and I will be talking to each other. So I will be asking him to remove that Act for firearms because it has had a negative impact on us and I will ask him to remove it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Nanulik, Mr. Netser.

Question 137 – 2(3): Update on Chesterfield Inlet Safe Harbour

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for Transportation. Mr. Speaker, the community of Chesterfield Inlet has been requesting a safe harbour, so I would like to ask for an update. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To date, we have been working closely with the community of Chesterfield Inlet. We have to find additional funds. So that's what we are working on currently. Thank you.

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

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Those seven communities had applied; are they going to be given the request, or how many communities will be receiving safe harbours? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you. There are eight communities that are included in the list. Perhaps since the new government was elected, I'm sure that we have to work closely with the appropriate minister and discuss these matters and brief them on the issues that we have already dealt with.

We will continue to work to make sure that we get our request, even though we have a new government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have a newly elected federal government. So has the minister followed up on this issue with them yet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Akesuk.

We can't hear you, Mr. Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you. Can you hear me now? I know that my clock is ticking and I am watching it. I did not go to the federal government and meet with them, so I will try and meet with them after our session is over to meet with my appropriate colleagues at the federal level. Thank you.

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

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These are very important issues; especially in the communities they are requesting good, safe harbours. Sometimes they lose their boats and we would like to hear about this as soon as possible. As the minister had stated that he'd go down to see his federal counterparts after the session, is he going down after the session today?

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Akesuk.

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If they want to see me tomorrow, I'll probably go down but I have to attend the session and I'll wait until the session is completely adjourned. Thank you.

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

Question 138 – 2(3): Detail of Budget Address Kept Confidential

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know myself, and all the Members of the Assembly here have been waiting for some time now for today, that is to have the budget address and the details of the budget become public. I understand that over lunch it has been the practice there has been always people locked up here in the Assembly to get a briefing because the information about the budget and what's in it is confidential until it has been presented here in the Legislative Assembly.

Given that, I'd just like to ask the Minister of Finance to confirm if that is the case that all the information has been kept confidential; no budget leaks of any kind prior to this session; the sitting day here today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister of Finance, Mr. Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we did have a lock up today. They briefed the media during the lock up today. Our budget for 2006-07 they did not discuss the contents of the budget address. Thank you.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know in past years, Members on this side of the House have been hollered at and screamed at for letting out information about the budget. As all members know, we meet in camera, and review it prior to it coming into the House.

I know that that's something that I've never done and I don't think any member on this side of the House has done that. It seems, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not sure, I'd like to ask the Minister of Finance to clarify, nothing has been let out of this budget.

I'm a little confused, that earlier today, the Minister of Health and Social Services, when I asked her about the \$2.3 million for the Baffin Regional Health Facility, hospital, she had indicated that it was in this budget.

So, I just want to get some clarification on that, whether that \$2.3 million that was mentioned in the press release January 18 is, as she had indicated earlier, in this budget, or is it something that is outside of this budget? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Mr. Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we did our usual practice with the budget. Thank you.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister had indicated that they did their usual practice with this budget.

I was listening quite intently to his budget address, and I didn't hear anything about this \$2.3 million for the Department of Health and Social Services. I heard our great House Leader over there talk; I heard the word "special warrant" being talked about.

I'm just wondering if this \$2.3 million is included in the main estimates that we're going to be looking at, that are going to be tabled later today, or not? That's basically my question. And, if they are, why was it publicly announced over a month ago? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can say that we will deal with that, with those amounts during Committee of the Whole here in this House and it will be clearer as to what the money is going to be spent for. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if the minister understands my question.

I'm just wondering; is that \$2.3 million that was announced on January 18 for the Department of Health and Social Services, that was over a month ago, and then today, I asked the minister about an update on how that was spent, and what they've accomplished with that, and she indicated that that money was in this budget, this year's budget. This year's budget is not before the House yet.

So is that \$2.3 million coming in the new fiscal year's budget, or is it somehow extra money that they found in this current year's budget? I don't know if that helps clarify it.

It just came across confusing like that, so I just want to make sure and get it clarified. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Minister Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will find out in the coming days when we discuss the budget during Committee of the Whole, and it will be clearer on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Question period is now over. 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. Simailak.

Item 17: Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills

Bill 12 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2006-07 – Notice

Hon. David Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Friday, February 24, 2006, that Bill 12, *Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2006-07* be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Item 18. Motions. Item 19. First Reading of Bills. Mr. Simailak.

Item 19: First Reading of Bills

Hon. David Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I request consent for this Assembly to waive the two-day notice requirement to allow for first reading of Bill 12, *Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2006-07*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): The minister is requesting unanimous consent to waive Rule 62(2) for the first reading of Bill 12. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Simailak.

Bill 12 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2006-07 – First Reading

Hon. David Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Nattilik, that Bill 12, *Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2006-07*, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): There is a motion on the floor. The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. Bill 12 has had its first reading.

First Reading of Bills. Item 20. Second Reading of Bills. Mr. Simailak.

Item 20: Second Reading of Bills**Bill 12 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2006-07 – Second Reading**

Hon. David Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Nattilik, that Bill 12, *Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2006-07*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill authorizes the Government of Nunavut to make operations and maintenance expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All in favour. All those opposed. Abstentions. The motion is carried and Bill 12 has had its second reading and may be referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Second Reading of Bills. Item 21. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Mr. Tootoo.

Motion 08 – 2(3): Early Adjournment

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Kugluktuk, that pursuant to Rule 46 that the Assembly be adjourned for the day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): The motion is in order. To the motion. All in favour of the motion. All those opposed. Abstentions. The motion is carried.

Item 24. Orders of the Day. Mr. Clerk.

Item 24: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A reminder for tomorrow morning at 9:00, a meeting of the Standing Committee Ajauqtiit in the Nanuq Room and the Regular Caucus meeting at 11:00 in the Tuktu Boardroom.

Orders for the Day for February 23:

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
18. First Reading of Bills
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 12
21. Report of Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): This House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 23, 2006 at 1:30 in the afternoon.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 16:08*

