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**Wednesday, March 1, 2006**

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**Iqaluit**

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

## Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

### *Speaker*

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(Nattilik)

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#### **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*

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(Cambridge Bay)

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

#### **Peter Kattuk**

(Hudson Bay)

*Regular Members' Caucus*

#### **Hon. Ed. Picco**

(Iqaluit East)

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

#### **David Alagalak**

(Arviat)

*Regular Members' Caucus*

#### **Peter Kilabuk**

(Pangnirtung)

*Regular Members' Caucus*

#### **Steve Mapsalak**

(Akulliq)

*Co-Chair, Full Caucus; Regular Members' Caucus*

#### **Hon. David Simailak**

(Baker Lake)

*Minister of Finance; Chair of the Financial Management Board*

#### **James Arreak**

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*Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole*

#### **Hunter Tootoo**

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

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(Amittuq)

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut**  
**Wednesday, March 1, 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. Alagalak to say the opening prayer.

>>*Prayer*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Good afternoon Premier, Cabinet Members, Members of the Legislature, and our staff. Orders of the Day. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Mr. Picco.

**Item 2: Ministers' Statements**

**Minister's Statement 066 – 2(3): Nunavut Apprenticeship Program**

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to inform the House about the Nunavut Apprenticeship Program, which is a combination of on-the-job and technical training.

The Department of Education works closely with private businesses and the employers of apprentices to ensure that Nunavummiut acquire the skills to participate more fully in the expansion of our territory's economy.

Mr. Speaker, traditionally, on-the-job training was completed on work sites here in Nunavut while the majority of in-school training was done outside of the territory. With the creation of the Nunavut Trades School in Rankin Inlet, the majority of our students will have the opportunity to remain in the territory for all of their training.

Since the creation of Nunavut, 48 apprentices have received their completion of apprenticeship certificate, 84 apprentices or trade qualifiers have received their certificate of qualification, and 31 had their inter-provincial red seal, a distinguished accomplishment recognized across the country. Currently, an impressive 116 apprentices are registered here in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, recently, a new apprenticeship board was selected to oversee the program and their first meeting was scheduled for the month of March 2006.

Other apprenticeship initiatives are underway, including collaborating with industry and mining stakeholders to determine the future needs of trades programs in Nunavut, as well as the development and coordination of our Nunavut Early Apprenticeship Training, or NEAT, Program.

Mr. Speaker, apprenticeship is vital in working towards self-reliance here in Nunavut and trades training will prepare Nunavummiut for lasting careers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

### **Minister's Statement 067 – 2(3): 2004 Hodgson Trophy Award**

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Mr. Speaker, during the Arctic Winter Games, the Arctic Winter Games International Committee presents the Hodgson Trophy to the contingent whose athletes best exemplify the ideals of fair play and team spirit.

This distinctive trophy, which was donated by the Commissioner S.M. Hodgson of the Northwest Territories, is a piece of Inuit artwork from the Canadian Arctic. The Hodgson trophy is on display at the Sport Yukon Hall of Fame in Whitehorse. A framed photograph of the trophy is presented to the winning contingent at each set of Arctic Winter Games.

Team Nunavut won this prestigious award during the 2000 Arctic Winter Games and again in the 2004 Arctic Winter Games. This award is a true celebration of the spirit that marks our participation in the Arctic Winter Games. These two trophies will probably be showcased in this Legislative Assembly right by the receivers.

So I encourage all members of Team Nunavut to continue to compete in the true spirit of fair play and sportsmanship in Alaska. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Item 3. Members' Statements. Mr. Curley.

### **Item 3: Members' Statements**

#### **Member's Statement 160 – 2(3): Polar Bear Management**

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to add my voice to those who have expressed concern over recent developments concerning the issue of polar bear management.

Mr. Speaker, our cultural survival as Inuit depends, to a significant extent, on our ability to exercise our harvesting rights and manage our wildlife resources.

I believe that the recent news from the United States clearly shows, and the Member for High Arctic already made a Members' Statement, that we need to vigorously defend our rights. We should be under no illusion that the so called environmental groups have our interests as Inuit in mind. We have to keep Inuit in mind. Their agendas are different.

Mr. Speaker, I have always believed that Inuit are the best and most responsible for each of our own wildlife. For untold generations, our physical and cultural survival as a people depended on our ability to responsibly manage the bounty of our land. Our existence today is testament to our success in doing so.

I am requesting unanimous consent to conclude my statement and I only have a few more words to say. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will conclude my statement. Mr. Speaker, when it comes to wildlife management we should first look to the knowledge and experience of the communities and the people whose own lives are so closely linked with the health of our land.

Our government must draw upon their wisdom in developing wildlife management practices and make reports. For example, I see value in the government developing a database for our historic, traditional knowledge for use in management policies.

We need to clearly communicate to outside organizations and government that Inuit can indeed be trusted to responsibly manage their own resources. We need to point out that so called scientific methods of assessing polar bear populations are not infallible.

Mr. Speaker, when I look around the circumpolar world today, I see threats to the cultural survival of Inuit. A recent disturbing example was a recent decision to ban the importation of sealskins into Greenland. I see the proposal to list polar bears as endangered as used in the legislation in the same way and we could lose part of our culture. I urge the government to rigorously defend the integrity of our harvesting practices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Member's Statement 161 – 2(3): More Support for Elders and Youth**

**Mr. Arreak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about an issue that I have been thinking about for quite some time.

Many individuals who are running to be elected usually make promises to give help to elders and the youth. They make their campaign speeches and get elected. I don't know



how their promises become a reality and when they do make their promises reality, they do it in the least way. When they start working on the issues of giving support, their support and services are provided at minimum.

When elders' benefits are increased, they increase them like only two or five percent. The elders don't know how much the increases are and their elders' pension increase doesn't even provide for a box of tea.

We use the elders' wisdom anytime we require it, so therefore we should be providing more support to the elders. When they receive senior citizens' homeownership programs or assistance programs, they have to apply themselves, but the applications are in English.

Also for youth services, every time the youth groups want to get some assistance they have to apply from other various entities, even though we promised we would give them support.

In Nunavut, education is at the lowest level compared to other provinces. When Nunavut students go down south to go to school, the level of education is put lower even though we had promised to give them support.

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

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

**Mr. Arreak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleagues.

We state that our younger generation is our future. We say that even though many leaders don't seem to live up to that promise.

I urge all of the members to make sure that we provide these services to our future generation. I'm sure that the younger generation doesn't want to operate the way we do. We want to see the young people becoming wise and old. We say that our young people are our future, but we provide very difficult situations for them.

I urge all of the members to try and rectify the hurdles we face in regard to youth services. I would like to urge the Cabinet Members to resolve some of those problems we face. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Member's Statement 162 – 2(3): Passing on Elders' Knowledge**

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to remind us about *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* because the government talks about the traditional knowledge of

Inuit, and we say that they have to be incorporated into the government's system. I rise today to talk about the knowledge that I hold.

Mr. Speaker, as I was growing up, I used to be told by my father and my grandfather, "If you respect the wildlife and if you respectfully kill them then you will not deplete the population. You have to be conservative and respect the wildlife, and make sure you provide food for the other people. That way the population of wildlife will not deplete.

That's the traditional knowledge of Inuit, but we hear the government say that if you'll be killing animals, or wildlife, you will be depleting the population. That's totally opposite of the knowledge of Inuit.

Even though the government did not govern Inuit long ago, we were very conservative of our wildlife. Our elders and senior citizens advised us of how to do the right thing; we governed ourselves without being governed by a foreign government; we survived with traditional laws; we respected the environment, though we faced difficult challenges, especially when we had to be assimilated to another culture.

At times, we neglect our knowledge, Mr. Speaker. For that reason, I'm urging the government to consider *Inuit Qaujimagatuaqangit*. So I'm just encouraging them because there are a lot of holders of traditional knowledge.

When the scientists say when you kill off the wildlife, they will start depleting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

### **Member's Statement 163 – 2(3): Nunavut Youth Court – Kugluktuk Students**

**Mr. Evyagotailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to say how proud I am of the students in Kugluktuk who recently participated in a Nunavut Youth Court.

Mr. Speaker, Janet Kadlun, Adam Kikpak, Emma Ivarluk, Helena Bolt, Ian Niptanatiak and Chelsea Power were selected by their teachers to serve as Kugluktuk's first Youth Court Advisory Panel.

Mr. Speaker, those students were given the opportunity to give advice to persons that were given a guilty plea or where a verdict has been established. They were asked to consider and give advice on what a fair sentence might be. Their advice, it has been agreed, has shown real wisdom.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this is a very good program for the students and it will definitely help them to acknowledge their own actions and how it could have an effect on others.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that this program can be done in all the Nunavut communities. I ask all Members to join me in congratulating those youth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Member's Statement 164 – 2(3): Ignoring Community Concerns for Arviat**

**Mr. Alagalak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am deeply concerned and worried about my constituents, that this government has ignored our community of Arviat in its capital expenditures last fall for 2006-07.

Furthermore, the government has again ignored the community of Arviat for other government program proposals such as midwifery, which was first proposed by Arviarmiut in the mid 80s and 90s. Without consulting Arviarmiut, it has been again moved to another community.

And training centres: Arviarmiut always has proposed to take part in the training of its own community residents and again, that seems to be far away and getting further as it was proposed.

Other major projects this government has identified and yet the government still expects Arviarmiut to pay recent increases in costs of fuel, gas, fuel riders, electricity costs, and not getting any job opportunities for the community of Arviat.

Mr. Speaker, I urge this government to reconsider Arviat needs and look at Arviat as being the second largest community in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Member's Statement 165 – 2(3): Lack of Services for People with Disabilities**

**Mr. Kilabuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to bring to your attention the lack of decent services and resources for individuals with disabilities by this government: housing, education, jobs, etcetera.

I must bring it to your attention, Mr. Speaker, because it appears that very little attention is being paid to the hardships and difficulties faced by Nunavummiut who struggle every day of their lives with a physical disability; people who are in these situations not by their own choice.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware of a number of individuals within my own community of Pangnirtung who do not have access to the resources that they need to be able to live

reasonably independently, with dignity and self-reliance. I know there are others across Nunavut with similar needs.

Mr. Speaker, every person deserves the opportunity to live a decent life. We need to be able to get outside and breathe some fresh air. We need to be able to visit our friends and family. We need to be able to go to the store and prepare to leave the house because not everything is in one room with everything within a hand's reach.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that special devices for individuals with disabilities such as wheelchairs are provided under programs such as the NIHB. It is important that the Department of Health and Social Services work towards ensuring that individuals receive the resources and support to which they are entitled, plus the thinking and reasons for denying requests for help must change.

I would like unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

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

**Mr. Kilabuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and my colleagues. Like I said, we have to change our thinking.

Our constituents can no longer be denied access to these motorized wheelchairs because their arms are still working and they are told that they need to exercise or because their wife or husband is still capable of pushing them in the wheelchair.

Mr. Speaker, motorized wheelchairs are not a luxury. They are a very basic piece of equipment that helps a person live a decent life and be independent. For example, if we were to ask government department employees: if we were to take your computers how would you be able to do your job? I'm just making an example.

Mr. Speaker, it sometimes seems that the government spares no expense when it comes to things like computers for its own offices, and they cost a lot of money; or a new couch or table, but they can't find the money for other things like good quality wheelchairs. Mr. Speaker, I mentioned wheelchairs, but there are many other basic resources also necessary to meet the needs of those who have, for example, difficulty seeing or hearing.

Mr. Speaker, last November, the first annual general meeting of the Nunavummi Disabilities Makinnasuaqtiit Society was held here in Iqaluit. Many delegates shared stories of the barriers that they face in getting access to the most basic services such as education, communication, and transportation.

Mr. Speaker, I know it's not solely the fault of this minister. We have improvements to make, but rather, we look to her to help us find workable solutions because this government must do a better job of defending and supporting the rights of individuals

with disabilities. It is about time that these people, our fellow Nunavummiut, were treated equally and with decency.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be asking the minister questions about this issue at the appropriate time. Thank you.

>>*Applause*

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

### **Member's Statement 166 – 2(3): Pandemic Emergency Response Plans**

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to raise the serious issue of pandemic preparation and emergency response at the municipal level in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, thinking about the unthinkable and planning for the unknown are difficult challenges. However, when we see the devastating impact of natural disasters and outbreaks of disease on other communities and countries, it is our responsibility to formulate adequate contingency plans to protect the health and safety of our public.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that one of the goals in the Department of Health and Social Services 2006-07 Business Plan is to finalize its Territorial Pandemic Plan.

However, I am uncertain as to what plans are in place for Community and Government Services, the Qulliq Energy Corporation, and other entities to work with hamlets in order to ensure the continuity of vital municipal services.

Mr. Speaker, during my time as Mayor of Cambridge Bay, we had discussions on the issue of emergency response plans. However, our small local government didn't really have the resources available to put these into place. I imagine that the situation is similar in many other Nunavut communities.

Mr. Speaker, imagine if an outbreak of a virulent disease struck a community and resulted in the firefighters being unable to respond to a blaze. Imagine if the trained Power Corporation workers in a community were laid low during the middle of a -40 cold snap and the lights went out. Basic municipal services like water and sewage are absolutely vital to the health of a community. If those services are interrupted for any length of time, we are at risk.

Mr. Speaker, I know that this is an issue that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has been working on. I urge our government to bring a coordinated approach to pandemic and disaster planning that includes our municipalities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

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

**Member's Statement 167 – 2(3): Anglican Church Fund Raising Dinner a Success**

**Hon. Ed. Picco** (interpretation): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the members who went to the fundraising dinner last night at the Anglican Parish Hall. I would like to thank everybody that helped and all the residents of Iqaluit and all those who made donations.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the pancake supper was a huge success. And we would like to thank also First Air, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Baffin Cannery and the Grind and Brew for providing coffee, tea, and a cook.

Mr. Speaker, we raised over \$4,500 last night. ...

>> *Applause*

... for the rebuilding of the new cathedral. Our next fundraiser will be a silent auction and supper. Again, Mr. Speaker, we would like to thank the members for attending and I would also like to take this opportunity to thank them for their kind donations to the supper last night. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was trying to be the first one because of course we can only recognise an individual one time. I have two individuals here from my constituency. Josh Mitsima, I would like to welcome you to the Gallery. And we also have an elder who is from my constituency. He's the one who always makes comments on the radio, Mr. Celestine Erikidjuk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From my riding, I don't believe she voted for me, but she is from Hall Beach. I would like to welcome Marlene Curley, Roland Kamukak, and Irene Willie from Arctic Bay, because of course she was adopted by one of my relatives. Thank you and I would like to welcome them to the Gallery.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Welcome to the Gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Minister Akasuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to take this opportunity to recognize an individual from my community. The grandson of my cousin, Mathew Ashevak, I would like to welcome him to the Gallery.

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

### **Speaker's Ruling**

Before we proceed to Oral Questions, I would like to make a statement.

I wish to advise the House that I have reviewed yesterday's *Hansard*. As members will recall, unanimous consent was sought and received to extend Question Period.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all members that when unanimous consent is sought to extend Oral Question Period, the Clerk's clock will be reset for an additional hour. Thank you.

Oral Questions. Member for Akulliq, Mr. Mapsalak.

### **Item 6: Oral Questions**

#### **Question 179 – 2(3): New Nursing Station for Repulse Bay**

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

When we were reviewing the capital estimates there was an item that asserted that there would be a nursing station built in Repulse Bay in 2009-10. This nursing station has been in the plans for a number of years now and has been deferred repeatedly. I would like to ask the minister if the building of the health centre will be deferred again this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the last presentation of the budget, the timelines we had discussed related to the capital projects for the Department of Health are the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The present health care centre that we are utilizing has a staff house on the second floor. Does the minister know if the health centre that will be built in 2009 will have staff housing on the second floor, such as this one we are currently using? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For 2007-08, there will be some funding set aside to start the planning for the design of the new health centre for Repulse Bay.

At this point in time, I do not know what the design will include, but I can say that the issue relating to nurses' housing is an issue that will be something incorporated into the discussion on the health centre. The money set aside for that will require involvement of people in the community for input as well as through the staff.

So at this point in time, I cannot say whether it will or will not include it until such time as we have had a chance to go through the planning process and design stages. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, I was making a comment on the lack of adequate housing or the shortage of housing.

If you are going to build separate staff housing for the nurses, I do not think it is going to make any sense at all because of course there's a severe shortage of housing. The population is growing and the numbers of houses are not keeping up with the population in the whole of Nunavut. I would like the minister to seriously consider building the staff housing right in the health centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Ms. Aglukkaq.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq** (interpretation): In regard to his concern, once we are on the design phase of the building, I will include it, since we have housing shortage in all of Nunavut, as everyone knows, if we are going to include nurses' staff housing, we will find out during the design phase.

I am committed to the concern since we have housing shortage, as we are all aware of that, in all of Nunavut. Using these funds, I will try to include the nurses' staff housing in the new health centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to thank the minister for her response. I can now look forward, if I'm still here, I will look forward to adequate staff housing for the nurses in 2008. Will you give us an update on the building of this health centre and the staff housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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



**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will commit to consult with the member through the design phase of the new health centre for Repulse Bay. At the same time, when the capital project managers travel to the community to consult on the design, to ensure that the member is aware that they are in the community to discuss the design of the facility, and I will keep the member informed as we progress. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Question 180 – 2(3): Pandemic Emergency Response Plans**

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Community and Government Services.

In my Member's Statement today, I spoke on the need for pandemic and emergency response planning that involves our municipalities. Can the minister outline, to the House, how her department is working with Health and Social Services in developing Nunavut's Territorial Pandemic Plan? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Community and Government Services, Ms. Brown.

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Health and Social Services and my department are working closely together when they are doing any planning.

In regard to your question, we are currently working on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that response. Can the minister tell me how the municipalities are involved in contingency planning for pandemics or other disasters? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Ms. Brown.

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is a concern, I'm sure, in the whole of Canada.

The federal government has been working on this for quite some time now and it has been worked on by the emergency preparedness group. We will give you an update on what kind of effect it would have on the pandemic and emergency response planning.

We are currently working on the *Emergency Measures Act*. Cabinet will review it, and then after it has been reviewed, we will be able to give you the details. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that information. Can the minister tell the House when the Territorial Pandemic Plan will be tabled in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Ms. Brown.

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure when it's available the copy will be given to you. There's a process that we have to follow through.

I would like to commit to the member that the Emergency Services section in CGS had a workshop in October right on this issue; it's being reviewed at this time and if I have to table it at the Legislative Assembly, I will do so. Of course, we have to follow the process and follow the regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, every time we turn on the television, or pick up the newspaper and read it, we hear talk of pandemics, and the avian bird flu. It's just a matter of time before the pandemic will arrive. It's not a question of if, but when it's coming.

So I think it's very important that Nunavut is prepared and the municipalities are prepared. So I think time is of the essence.

My final question for the minister, Mr. Speaker, is: will the minister commit to tabling a list of the municipalities in Nunavut who have emergency response plans including contingency planning for pandemics? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Ms. Brown.

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, it's a major concern for all of Nunavut. We hear of it on a daily basis through the media. What we don't see is the agencies and the governments, and the groups that make the plans so that we'll be prepared for it. I think we're more prepared than you realize.

I will have a discussion with the minister and I will table the plan once it's been reviewed and completed. At this time, it's currently in the works and the Government of Nunavut (interpretation ends) is committed to ensuring residents are educated and trained to know

and understand the types of emergencies they may face and to extend the practise to be prepared to meet them.

Once they are ready, we will table them in the House, but I would like to assure the members here that our people are working on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Question 181 – 2(3): Borrowing Debt Cap**

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Finance, and it deals with the cap, not ball caps, but debt caps.

Mr. Speaker, again, in the Auditor General's Report for 2005, there was a considerable amount of attention paid on the debt cap.

Mr. Speaker, we know in the minister's budget address, there was not a single mention on where Nunavut stands with respect to our debt cap, which is \$ 200 million, set out by legislation. I'd like to ask the minister if he could tell us, as of today, if he knows how much borrowing room remains on this cap. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. David Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this time, we have a cap of \$200 million; our debt cap is at \$200 million. Currently, we have identified (interpretation ends) about \$153 million in debt. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that response.

In light of some of the comments made by the Auditor General in her report, and I'll quote them, it's on paragraph 43, it says; "The government needs to have a sense of the amount of it's actual borrowings to ensure that it does not inadvertently approach or exceed the debt cap." Also, it says, "In our view, at present, there is a risk that the government could reach a debt cap and not even realize it until much later."

My question to the minister is; how confident is he in those numbers or some of the items that were identified in the Auditor General's Report, looked at and figuring out what that debt cap is. If not, will they be reviewing it? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Mr. Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it is true we are reviewing the debt cap after the Auditor General's Report on this.

We will be getting additional staff who will be working within the department. It will be a treasury function (interpretation ends) effective the 2006-07 fiscal year. Part of this function will be to monitor and report the Government of Nunavut's debt on a quarterly basis.

(interpretation) So that is how we are reviewing and how we will be monitoring the debt cap on a monthly basis to make sure we do not go over the capacity of \$200 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One can automatically conclude, as I mentioned yesterday, that the government always agrees with the recommendations of the Auditor General.

Mr. Speaker, in paragraph 44 of the 2004 Report to the Assembly, they recommended that the government report where its actual debt stands against the debt cap in its consolidated financial statements. They also indicated that this is the best practice that is practiced by the Government of the Northwest Territories.

My question to the minister is: why was that amount not put into this year's statements as the Auditor General identified that they are not there? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. David Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will look into his comment as to why this is so. I will consult with the member after I get the results. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the minister to commit to tabling a list of the debt that we have outstanding. He's indicated the \$153 million, if he could table and provide, to this House, a copy of exactly where that debt is by department, or Crown corporation, or whatever; a list showing the \$153 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Mr. Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will be able to table them in the House only when if I am allowed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 182 – 2(3): Harvesters' Support Program**

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for Wildlife.

Last year, we discussed the topic of amending. How was this simple program or natural disasters program...through natural disaster, if a harvester's equipment could be destroyed, what kind of natural disaster does it have to be in order to be eligible for compensation?

**Speaker** (interpretation): Mr. Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, Mr. Kilabuk used to ask this question. They have to be on the ice. For example, when the ice floe comes off the ice and they start floating, those are the natural disasters.

We are reviewing it to make changes. So once the review is done and complete, we want to make sure that it applies to all hunters and to make sure that it's clear and understandable for the hunters. For example, if there was a boat that drifted away, perhaps they could be compensated. The Inuit who have their own property...my officials are reviewing the compensation for harvesters. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Curley**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm going to quote my understanding under the Hunters and Trappers Contribution Policy and the Support of Harvesting Policy. There is one provision with respect to natural disaster compensation that is currently only related to damages from forest fire.

This government doesn't have a Natural Disaster Policy for Nunavummiut. It's only one paragraph that should be changed; it doesn't need to be reviewed.

We don't have forest fires in this part of Nunavut. Will the minister include natural disasters related to ice, snow, or wind, for all that matter, for Nunavummiut so that they would qualify and not be subject to disqualification because of the current policy? Could you undertake to change that one wording, really? Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Mr. Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, we will review it carefully and I will also provide the amendments to the policy for your review and consult with you. We will consult with the members on the natural disaster compensation. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Curley**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Committee of the Whole committed, about four or five months ago, that the contribution allowance for the natural disaster fund be increased from last year's \$20,000 to \$150,000 additional. That would mean that it would

be up roughly \$190,000. Where is that recommendation for increasing \$150,000 for natural disaster recommended by this Assembly? Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Mr. Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Environment, once our main estimates for 2006-07, they will be included. The changes to the amount will be discussed at that time. I probably will be able to respond better once we go line-by-line for my Department of Environment. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think the policy applies to Nunavut. We talk about forest fires that you can compensate, perhaps if you can rectify this problem to make sure that Nunavummiut can receive compensation from natural disasters.

Can you commit to me that you will deal with this right away because I think there's \$80,000 left in the natural disasters relief fund. So could you do this as soon as possible? Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will deal with this immediately. I don't know how long you'll have to wait. We can initiate this work to make sure that we have a better contribution allowance for Nunavut harvesters. Thank you.

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

### **Question 183 – 2(3): Inmates at Baffin Correctional Centre Attending Funerals**

**Mr. Arreak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Justice.

Constituents have raised a concern with me regarding inmates in territorial custody at the Baffin Correctional Centre receiving permission and assistance to attend relative's funerals. They believe that inmates should be able to do this.

My question for the minister is: what policy does the department have in place regarding inmates attending funerals of relatives, and does the department provide assistance for inmates to travel outside of Iqaluit to attend funeral services? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister responsible for Justice, Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know that we encounter this quite a bit at the facility. In each case, if there is a death in the immediate family, I know that arrangements are made to travel with the inmate to the funeral, and to grieve with the family.

So each case is looked at in terms of security as well. So each case is quite different, but we do our best to accommodate grieving family members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Arreak:** Thank you, Minister. Keeping in contact with family members can be an important part of healing and rehabilitation for inmates. What new programs has the department introduced to help inmates keep from re-offending again? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Premier Okalik.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Baffin Correctional Centre that the member is speaking of has a number of programs focussed towards *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, and a lot of on the land programs are running out of the facility and we do have elders that come and assist in the healing of inmates on a regular basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Arreak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. What education and job skills programs are offered to inmates in territorial custody so they can have a chance to earn a living when they are released? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Premier Okalik.

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are quite a few programs actually.

At the facility, we have a classroom with an adult instructor that assists the students in trying to get additional education, like the GED Program. We do have other programs directed towards training for jobs, carving. I can table those programs and provide it to the member at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Question 184 – 2(3): Migrating Birds and Bird Flu**

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure which minister to direct my question, whether it's the Minister for the Department of Environment, or maybe Health.

My question is in regard to the Avian Bird Flu. In our region in Nunavut, the birds that migrate up north, I just want to make sure that we don't have to worry about bird flu. Maybe it's easier to direct it to the Department of Health or the Department of Environment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister of Environment, Mr. Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. We will be keeping a close eye on it because the birds will be migrating pretty soon. We will ask the communities to work closely with us, especially with our wildlife officers. We will let them know to work with the communities. If birds are found dead in the community or the surrounding area, then our wildlife officer would be able to get it examined.

The ducks and chickens are mainly the ones that have the bird flu overseas, but we will keep a close eye on those to make sure that the Inuit are not affected. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The birds eat anything along their way from down south to here and we know that they might be eating something that's contaminated maybe through their feed. That's one of the reasons why I'm asking a question to make sure that those birds be examined to make sure that they will be saved so we won't have to worry about them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All the birds, when they come to Canada, maybe the ones down south would have heavier impact. For the birds that do migrate up north, we will be working closely with the federal government. If they were dying down south, then that would be a good indicator that we would have to keep a closer eye on them before they do come up. So that's how we would be working on it. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Minister. My supplementary to the question is: the birds that stay in the communities all year long, will they be able to be examined? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the birds that stay up here all year-round; there are still a lot of *Tulugait*, ravens, here in Iqaluit and they don't seem to be affected. I think we would know right away and able to tell ahead of



time. If it was spreading through Canada, then we would be informed, but so far, we have not heard anything that it has come to Canada. Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Your final supplementary, Mr. Kattuk.

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not talking about ravens. I'm talking about sea birds. They stay up here all year round. They are not usually land birds, but more on the ice.

In my community, there are ducks all year round. They stay on the islands all year round. So I'm referring more to the ducks because when the food that we purchase from stores runs out, do we have anything to worry about? That is one of the reasons why I asked this question. Will the birds that stay up north all year round be studied? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will. The Avian Influenza is overseas and I think the only way the people can be affected is if a person brought a bird from overseas, but we haven't heard anything to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Question 185 – 2(3): High Cost of Living in Nunavut**

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

Mr. Speaker, I have risen in this House on many occasions to draw attention to issues related to the extremely high cost of living in Nunavut's High Arctic communities. As my constituencies are non-decentralized, jobs are hard to come by.

For individuals who are on income support, every penny counts, and for those with small children, it is often difficult to make ends meet. Prime Minister Harper has announced that he will introduce a plan to give parents \$1,200 a year for each child under six.

Can the minister tell this House whether this federal funding of \$100 a month will be clawed back from benefits received by individuals on income support; yes or no? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Claw back regulations are put in place under the auspices of the Government of Nunavut, meaning that we determine, based on the program, and the availability, what would be applicable.

I gave an example yesterday in the House of where we weren't clawing back the Energy Rebate Program. That decision still has to be made concerning the monies allocated under Mr. Harper's plan. Again, Mr. Speaker, it is our understanding that that should kick in on April 1. I believe that's what has been reported in the media. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not understand. Did he say yes or no? I would like a yes or no answer.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Mr. Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sorry if I wasn't clear on the answer. What I suggested to the Member of the House was; is that the federal government has to introduce a budget first to be able to bring forward their child benefits.

So it's hypothetical right now to ask if it would be clawed back if and when it would be presented because it hasn't been presented and it's only been talked about. So Mr. Speaker, we're in a very difficult position because we don't know exactly what that program will entail.

So once the budget is passed and once Mr. Harper outlines what exactly is the \$1,200, is it coming in as a cheque at the end of one month; is it coming in one lump sum of \$1,200, and so on and so forth, then we will ascertain as a government what, if there would be a claw back for income support purposes.

Mr. Speaker, claw backs would not occur to any person who is working or to any individual in Nunavut who has a job. It would only apply to programs under the Government of Nunavut, for example, an income support person.

So I hope that helps clarify the answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Barnabas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister tell me or this House: when will this claw back happen? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Mr. Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I don't know when the claw back would occur even if it would occur because we haven't seen the details of the program that Mr. Harper has talked about.

It's like the Iqaluit Port Project; he had a promise that he would build a port. I can't say when it's going to be built, where it's going to be built and I can't say that there's going to be a claw back on the National Child's Benefit Program because we haven't seen the details, number one and number two, he has to introduce a budget in the House and get it passed to do it.

Right now, we see opposition across the country to this type of plan because a lot of the jurisdictions, ten provinces, have signed on to a National Daycare Program which funded the provinces.

So what I'm suggesting to you: once we and the government have an opportunity to look at the details of the program, then we will have a better opportunity to say what the impact would be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Barnabas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A number of Nunavut residents have recently received \$250 fuel rebates from the federal government. Will this amount be clawed back from benefits received by individuals on income support; yes or no? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Mr. Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** No, Mr. Speaker, no. Again, we had a prior knowledge of that program, of course, to coming out. The Cabinet decided in November that any money under the Energy Rebate Program would not be clawed back. And that's a good example of the National Child Benefit Program.

Once we realize and find out exactly logistically, administratively, and financially what that program entails, then we will have an opportunity, as a Cabinet, to review and see what the parameters would be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

### **Question 186 – 2(3): High Cost of Building Public Housing**

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for Public Housing.

(interpretation) To make a preamble, we had been informed, well, especially for the last three years the expenditures for public housing units have been rising drastically. We can't keep up with the cost of operating and maintaining rental units.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister responsible for Housing: what measures have been taken to reduce the cost of building public housing? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Housing Corporation has been doing an ongoing review of how they can decrease the cost of building rental housing units. We are looking at all alternatives. Just recently, I sent out an email on how we can decrease the building of these units.

This is an excellent question and I would like to assure the member that our department has been doing an ongoing review of the cost of building these units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We hear a lot of things from the people out there and I think it is way too expensive.

There is building up to code; there are extra things that are required to build houses. For example, putting in piles for a house, for even a small house, for a stick built house, the piles are extremely expensive. What contributes to the high cost of building these units; is it the piles; is it the lumber?

If you look at it section by section, I'm sure that the Housing Corporation can find out what the major contributor is causing these units to be so expensive. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't really tell you what major contributing factor is causing these units to be so expensive.

Usually, contractors give you an estimate of how much it would cost to build a unit because of course that's the only way we can build it. We can look at how we can decrease the costs and how we can get longer life spans for the units that we do build.

That's usually what we do in our department. We can do a review and see where we can bring down the costs, or we can possibly look to the federal government to see if we can increase the number of dollars that do come in for the building of these units. I can discuss this issue further with the Nunavut Housing Corporation staff.

As I said earlier, usually we receive bids, and award the contract to the lowest bidder. We do look at alternative ways that would decrease the costs of building these units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Your second supplementary, Mr. Alagalak.

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're well aware of it, but we do know that stick built houses have a short life span.

There are units that were built in 1963, and they're retrofitted every couple of years or so. We're not going to see new units being built out of stone or gold, but if we look at our western counterparts, or down in Montreal, there are lumber yards galore down there.

The cost of lumber is increasing drastically in the central part of Canada. I would like to ask the minister if we could consider buying our lumber from a place where it doesn't cost so much, like in the west for example. I would like the department to consider the piling. They used to be six by six, but are now ten by ten, and they're high beams.

That was my last question, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We do look at how we can decrease the amount when we are going to be building units. We look at how much cheaper it will be if we use particular companies, but as you know, cost of living has increased all over the place. We do look at all kinds of ways to decrease the amount. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Pangnirtung, Mr. Kilabuk.

### **Question 187 – 2(3): Changing Street Light Bulbs**

**Mr. Kilabuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will ask if the Minister of Energy got his exercise. I apologize, Mr. Speaker. As I wished to say, I am starting the training stage. I am sure that the minister will respond to my question.

Mr. Speaker, because we have to lighten up the load during Question Period, I wanted to ask the minister why it is so expensive to change a street light bulb. Is it because of the freight costs to bring them here or is it to use the employees to change the light bulb?

That was just a question that I wanted to ask, but Mr. Speaker, these are two issues that come about in regard to changing light bulbs in Pangnirtung.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for Energy. How can you change street light bulbs in the communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Over the last few days just before the House started, there was some concern as to whom Mr. Kilabuk would be asking his first question to and what would it entail. I had thought it might be to me, but I knew he could not ask me about fish. So his first question was about fish and we were right on at least half of that.

Mr. Speaker, the member brings up an interesting point and that is the changing of light bulbs. I will go back to an earlier discussion and that was there was a concern raised at one point on how the lights came on in the communities: do we have someone in the power plant turning on a switch when it got dark and so on.

The lights are operated by photo sensor which means when it gets light they will automatically come on or go off and it is done in that kind of sequence. Mr. Speaker, how many people does it take to change a light bulb? Well, we could be answering that all day...

Mr. Speaker, the quick answer is: at each power plant, there is a supply of light bulbs. There are specific types of bulbs for specific types of purposes. In most of our communities, we will see the orange type of light bulb and we also see the white type of light bulb.

The orange type of light bulb and the white type of light bulb are changed in the same manner. There is a ladder brought up to the pole. The person would climb up the pole using safety equipment, make sure all the safety gear is in place, unscrew the bulb, and then screw the bulb back in.

Mr. Tootoo has volunteered to be part of that group. I think even Mr. Tootoo, with his limited ability, would be able to change a bulb. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Mr. Kilabuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I like the sense of humour and appreciate the fact that he does know that much about changing light bulbs and what kind of bulbs some require because in the community of Pangnirtung, the common problem that has been expressed to me with the bulbs that needed repair had to be replaced. The delays in replacing those were with excuses and reasons they had forwarded to the municipality.

By saying that, they're not going to be replaced until the Power Corporation finally gets somebody into the community. So it is not just a simple fact of picking up a yellow bulb versus a red bulb and it doesn't seem to matter.

My supplementary question to the minister is: can the minister looking into developing a training program so that locals can provide an essential service, and at the same time, benefit from an employment opportunity?

I will continue to push every chance I get to raise the need for jobs until these decentralized positions that were supposed to come in have been filled.

So pertaining to that Mr. Speaker, will the minister responsible commit to looking into training local guys from Pangnirtung to be able to change the light bulbs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Mr. Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In some cases, depending on the community, there are plant operators who have the ability to be able to go up the poles. Again, I was talking about the safety issues.

In communities where that is not the case, that there is some issue with that, then our regular maintenance checks this past September we changed the rules, or the norms of operating the corporation, to ensure that on regular maintenance, and if there are bulb replacements that need to be facilitated, then those are carried out.

On the training aspect, the member is correct. The Power Corporation is one of the largest users of apprentices in the Territory of Nunavut. We regularly hold a linesman boot camp. I think, right now, we have seven under training, who are all Inuit, to be linesmen.

Again, the corporation has done very well on the apprenticeship training, but, particularly in the community, and the member is correct, there are work concerns with the regular changing of the bulbs. That changed in September as I just pointed out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Your second supplementary, Mr. Kilabuk.

**Mr. Kilabuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm still not clear if the minister is committed to making the training opportunities available to my community. As I indicated earlier, this really should be a no-brainer because the Power Corporation does come back to me and say, "Well, this will cost too much."

Well, those can be taken directly out of the savings from the reduced number of charters they use to send repairmen into the community, if you look at the cost of a charter, that's quite substantial for each charter, as you know Mr. Speaker.

Will the minister commit to helping to develop these training programs for somebody in Pangnirtung to be able to replace the light bulbs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Mr. Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated earlier, we do have something that we call a boot camp for linesman.

In the Power Corporation, you have several different types of responsibilities and jobs. Everyone can't climb a pole. Some people are specifically dealing with running the diesel generators as an example. In the Power Corporation, people who go up the pole are lines people.

We do have, as I said, a boot camp for lines people. We have a couple right now from Nunavut, Inuit beneficiaries who will be graduating from that program this year. What we will do, Mr. Speaker, is try to recruit some people from Pangnirtung.

Through questioning in the House today, the member has raised it and might bring more awareness to it. If there are people in Pangnirtung who are interested in being journeymen lines people for the corporation, then we'll be doing another boot camp this spring and we'll be able to look at an opportunity to bring them in.

At the same time, I don't want to leave a false impression, Mr. Speaker. The reality is that if the lights had to be changed, they can be done without sending a charter into communities.

When a charter does go into a community by the Power Corporation, it is on a specific issue where, for example, Mr. Speaker, there needs to be maintenance required in the power plant itself. That is only done on a cost basis, meaning if we could fly someone in on a regular schedule, then that's what occurs.

So I hope that helps answer the member's question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Your final supplementary, Mr. Kilabuk.

**Mr. Kilabuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I must apologize if I'm giving a picture to the mind of my colleague that every time a light bulb needs to be changed then it's done through a charter.

No. I know there are staff that travel on regular schedules, but it goes back to my question Mr. Speaker, because I know that the Power Corporation will not hire individuals from my community if they are not trained.

So again Mr. Speaker, because I know that they will not hire people who are not trained to be able to do a simple job, or what should be a simple job, and can be done by any one of my unemployed constituents that are looking for a job.

Will the minister commit to helping to develop a training program to be able to do this work? Thank you.



**Speaker** (interpretation): Mr. Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated, we're planning on holding another boot camp for linesmen in April of this year, in a month and a half. Anyone from Pangnirtung who has an opportunity will have an opportunity to apply to join that boot camp. That's an on-the-job program and a lot of our people working in the communities have trained on-the-job to do this specific training on OTJ - on-the-job.

At the same time Mr. Speaker, the member is right. When you are dealing with electricity and going up poles, you need to be trained. You can't just hire someone off the street and say, "Ed, you are going to do that." And as I indicated earlier, it would be very difficult for someone of Mr. Tootoo's calibre to just go out there and climb up a pole and change a light.

So Mr. Speaker, as long as training is done on-the-job and if an opportunity exists for anyone from Pangnirtung or any other community in Nunavut who would like to be a linesman, then we would be holding a boot camp in April and we will make sure that we solicit those names. And if the member, further to that, has any information where some people that have applied to the Power Corporation to be on a program, qualified for whatever, and were not successful, then we would be able to follow that up too.

So I hope that helps answer any concerns. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Question Period is now over. Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek unanimous consent to go back to Item 5 in our Orders of the Day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): The member is seeking unanimous consent to go back to Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please proceed, Mr. Tootoo.

### **Revert to Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery**

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I recognize some individuals in the Gallery, I would just like to comment to the Minister of Energy that jealousy will get him nowhere.

Mr. Speaker, in the Gallery with us here, it's my pleasure to acknowledge an individual that I have known for many years and was actually living in my constituency when I first got elected in 1999 and was a good supporter of mine and that is Mr. Kusugak who is now our Languages Commissioner.

And with Mr. Kusugak is Shawna Wright, is a policy analyst and Anna Zeigler, the public affairs person for his office. I would like to welcome them to the Gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

**Speaker** (interpretation): Welcome to the Gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Replies to Budget Address. Item 11. Petitions. Item 12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Item 13. Reports of Committee on the Review of Bills. Item 14. Tabling of Documents.

#### **Item 14: Tabling of Documents**

##### **Tabled Document 079 – 2(3): Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut for the Year Ending March 31, 2005**

Members, I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut for the year ending March 31, 2005.

>>Applause

Tabling of Documents. Mr. Barnabas.

##### **Tabled Document 080 – 2(3): Photos of Deteriorating Buildings in Grise Fiord**

**Mr. Barnabas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last week, I spoke about the new infrastructure required in the High Arctic. As I mentioned at that time, the government offices in Grise Fiord were once condemned, but today government employees still work in this building.

Today, I would like to table a series of photographs that clearly reveal the shameful conditions of the Grise Fiord government office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Some Members:** Shame, shame.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Tabling of Documents. Premier.

##### **Tabled Document 081 – 2(3): Government of Nunavut's Report to the 2004-05 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner**

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the following document. The Government of Nunavut's Report to the 2004-05 Annual Report of the Information and Privacy Commissioner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Tabling of Documents. Item 15. Notices of Motions. Mr. Curley.

**Item 15: Notices of Motions****Motion 10 – 2(3): Establishment of the Electoral Boundaries Commission – Notice**

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I give notice that on Friday, March 3, 2006, I will move the following motion:

NOW THEREFORE I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Akulliq, that an Electoral Boundaries Commission be now established;

AND FURTHER I move that the Legislative Assembly recommend the appointment of the Honourable Justice Beverley Browne, John Ningark, and Bernadette Niviatsiak as members of the commission;

AND FURTHER I move that the Legislative Assembly recommend that the Honourable Justice Beverley Browne be appointed presiding member of the commission;

AND FURTHER I move that the commission, in fulfilling its mandate under the *Nunavut Elections Act*, receive all necessary support from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking that we deal with the motion today. Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Notices of Motions. Item 16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 17. Motions. Mr. Curley.

**Item 17: Motions**

**Mr. Curley:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to deal with the motion I just gave notice of earlier.

**Speaker** (interpretation): The member is asking for unanimous consent to deal with the motion today. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Curley.

**Motion 10 – 2(3): Establishment of the Electoral Boundaries Commission**

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. Mr. Speaker;

WHEREAS the *Nunavut Elections Act* requires that an Electoral Boundaries Commission be established within 24 months of the swearing in of the Members of the Legislative Assembly after the first general election following the coming into force of the Act;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly is prepared to recommend appointments to the commission;

NOW THEREFORE I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Akulliq, that an Electoral Boundaries Commission be now established;

AND FURTHER I move that the Legislative Assembly recommend the appointment of the Honourable Justice Beverley Browne, John Ningark, and Bernadette Niviatsiak as members of the commission;

AND FURTHER I move that the Legislative Assembly recommend that the Honourable Justice Beverley Browne be appointed presiding member of the commission;

AND FURTHER I move that the commission, in fulfilling its mandate under the *Nunavut Elections Act*, receive all necessary support from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): The motion is in order. To the motion. Question has been called. All those in favour. All those opposed. Abstentions. The motion is carried.

Item 17. Motions. Item 18. First Reading of Bills. Item 19. Second Reading of Bills. Item 20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bill 12, *Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2006-07* with Mr. Arreak in the Chair.

We'll take a 20-minute break.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:29 and resumed at 15:56*

### **Item 20: Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters**

**Chairman** (Mr. Arreak): Thank you for coming back here. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following item to deal with: Bill 12. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Evyagotailak.

**Mr. Evyagotailak**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to proceed with the review of Bill 12 and continue with the Department of Health and Social Services' Main Estimates and Business Plan. If time permits, we then will commence the review of the Department of the Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman**: Thank you, Mr. Evyagotailak. (interpretation) Do you agree?

**Some Members**: Agreed.

**Bill 12 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2006-07 – Review in Committee – Health and Social Services**

**Chairman:** Thank you. For the record, Madam Minister, please introduce your witnesses.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** To my left is Dave Ramsden, the Deputy Minister, and to my right is Eric Whitworth, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. Yesterday, we were on general comments and I would like to remind everybody that every member has 10 minutes for general comments.

Some members already gave their general comments, but for those who didn't, I'll give them this time. Are there any general comments? If there are no general comments, we will turn to page H-5. (interpretation ends) Health and Social Services. Branch Summary. Directorate. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) I don't think I thanked you yesterday. I thank you again.

The letter I read before, now I wonder if she can expand further so that the smaller communities will have a better knowledge on the medical area because it will be different from the bigger centres.

Social services should be the same because they need counsellors and we are not giving enough support to our social services and the counsellors or social workers. There's a shortage of social workers. If they want specialized treatment, then they have to go out of Nunavut. What I said yesterday on page 3: will the services be increased for social services? Yes, we can understand.

I would like to ask the minister if she can further explain (interpretation ends) that it is not reasonable to attempt to offer the full spectrum of services that people in major populations can just take for granted.

(interpretation) That is my question, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** We are on page H-5, H-6, and H-7 - they're the same. Minister Aglukkaq.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday in my opening remarks, I did say that. What I am trying to emphasize here and recognize here is that it is not possible to provide every single service available currently in bigger and larger centres. I will use one example and that is related to hospitals. And the member uses that as an example also.

As much as possible, we are trying to maintain a level of service that we are currently providing in every community and enhance those as the needs arises, but we also recognize that for every citizen that requires services, whether it is social services or health, the access to those services may differ depending on each community.

Basically, that was just to emphasize or recognize as an example that is not possible to provide, as an example, hospitals in every community, and that we do recognize there is a need for services such as health care in every community, social workers, and so on, but depending on where the individual is, access to those services, again, differ and we do recognize that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Minister. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The social services and the counsellors, they are essential services and other services that are available in the bigger centres. Those counsellors and specialists to the families or to the youth in the smaller communities should be supported more.

It is the lack of funding that they do not have those benefits. I wonder if the minister can say that they give services to the people who are in need of those services; that the government and department will try and get all those services as much as they can. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I completely agree with the member's comments. The quality of care and services that are provided by Health and Social Services are top priority. We have to maintain the services that we do well and focus our energy in the areas that we are not doing too well and focus on addressing those concerns such as providing or reviewing the functions of social workers.

That is the emphasis I think that we need to direct our energy to in this department. We need to focus again on providing good quality care services to grassroots community levels and that is where the energy should be. I repeat that we need to look at providing support where we do good service and addressing the concerns that we are not doing too well in. That is the direction that I have envisioned for the organization this year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe earlier this year, there was a story where a consultant had concluded that social workers were under-staffed and under-funded and so on.

In view of that, I believe that that report has not been tabled in this House. Could the minister maybe consider tabling that provision of the report if it has not already been

tabled? And could the minister respond to the House that if, in fact, social workers are under-funded, and short of personnel and obviously resources to do their jobs, what steps the minister has taken to ensure that this fact has been taken care of. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, just to acknowledge the report that he makes reference to, the report was produced by the Superintendent of Child Welfare, and I don't know if I've tabled that report in the House or not, but in that interview, there are a number of areas that were expressed.

What have we done since that? I've directed my officials to review the functions of all social workers across Nunavut. I've also asked that their jobs be reviewed in terms of the compensation that is paid to social workers.

The other area that I've also asked internally is to look at how we do business. Part of that is that for every social worker, there are a number of functions that they carry out. We may need to look at whether those functions carried out, such as probation, best fit with social workers.

At the same time, I've asked for a review of the allocation of social workers by community. Since 1999, that has not been reviewed and it's an area again that we need to look at in addressing some of the workloads of our social workers.

Again, I go back to emphasizing and focusing our energies in areas we do well, but in also paying attention and addressing where we're not doing too well, and that includes the functions and the workload of our social workers, or any position.

So since that time, there has been progress internally to start that process. The job descriptions have been evaluated through Human Resources as an example, but it's broader, it will take a bit of time and it will involve not just issues here but across the territory by community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman (interpretation):** Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the minister's direction to address some of the problems that have been identified.

I know I can tell you that social workers in our communities will certainly appreciate the direction. I fully want to encourage that you do so, continue to do so. They need more resources than probably more than any other social services that we obtain.

I just wanted to, Mr. Chairman, try and reconcile the two areas that I said I thought were conflicting. I'm not going to put any blame on the government or anything, but when I looked at the statement, you said major population centres enjoy a whole lot more services, whether that was facility-wise, or what not, or services-wise, I'm not sure. The

communities should also enjoy the medical services, or health services, and social services, if at all possible, to the extent as they are enjoyed by the larger communities.

Having said that, I just wanted to remind the minister and her staff that when I read some of the *Inuuqatigiitiarniq* Healthy Communities Objectives, there is one on the first page, I believe the third bullet on the right, by 2020 Nunavut is a place where, and I quote, "Health and social conditions and indicators are at or better than the Canadian average."

When I read statements like the smaller communities should not expect to enjoy what major communities enjoy, it concerns me. I'm going to leave it at that.

So I don't want the smaller communities to feel that they are going to have to settle for second best in terms of medical health services or social programs. So I just want that to be clear so that I don't confuse anyone.

Mr. Chairman, I'm going to leave my comments and questions here. I will have more questions with transportation and medical issues. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. I don't think there was a question there, but minister, if you want to respond to that, go ahead.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I recognize the member's concern and it's certainly not our intention to do that, but to also recognize that it's not possible to have every community have the same level of service across the board.

The comment there was just to acknowledge that there is a difference, but the aim will be to provide the best care and service as possible. We do recognize in some areas, the communities' staffing, we have not kept pace with the growth of each centre and to also start addressing our energies and resources to those priorities of each community.

So I would just like to acknowledge the member's comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Alagalak.

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page H-7, I would like to ask a question in regard to the Nunavut Arctic College and it's delivery of midwifery-based options to improve community continuity of maternity care services in remote Nunavut communities. In 2005-06, it was at 150 and now it's at 326.

The issue of midwifery was going to be started in 2003 in Arviat and it never got off the ground. You stated that it would be moved to Rankin Inlet. Is that why there's an increase for this year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Madam Minister.



**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During 2005-06, we did identify \$150,000 and from what I understand of that program, it was to design the Midwifery Training Program. That involved working with agencies, women's groups, and the elders in designing the Midwifery Training Program.

The increase in the amount was an enhancement to start the delivery of that particular program. This is a training program and not necessarily the midwifery service offered through the health centres such as the Rankin Inlet Health Centre. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Alagalak.

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Mr. Chairman, what about the plans that were initiated in the 2003 Midwifery Training Program in Arviat? You probably said that because you didn't know about the plans to have that Midwifery Training Program in Arviat. We were just waiting for the program to get started and then, all of a sudden, we heard that it was moved to Rankin Inlet.

It shouldn't be in one community, it should be in more than one community in order for the communities to benefit. What would I say to the people now because you didn't make any mention of the plan that was originally slated for Arviat. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple points: the training program that has been offered through Nunavut Arctic College is to train individuals to become midwives. The next step from that process is to use those skilled people to provide midwifery services in communities. And the whole idea about providing health care closer to home, this would be an example of providing that service closer to home.

So the individuals being trained would be able to go back to their home communities and provide midwifery services. That's our intention for down the road.

I don't know all of the details of what went on in 2003 and prior to, but I have asked staff to research some of those concerns that Mr. Alagalak has raised. And one thing I should also note that I believe in this budget, there are two maternal care workers allocated for the community of Arviat. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Alagalak.

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Well, we were not informed. We were not told that after their training, they would go back to their communities and practice midwifery.

It does alleviate some of the concerns we have, but they even had struck a committee and I'm sure that they were looking forward to have those training programs available. We have a large population in Arviat now and Arviat has the highest birthrate in Nunavut.

I don't think that we should just leave it at that, and there are a lot of women who would like to take midwifery-based programs. I can now give a little bit more information to the people of Arviat and I'm sure that in the upcoming years we will see these types of programs be made available. Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. That was more of a comment than a question. We are on H-5, H-6, and H-7. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister and her officials for coming again today.

I wanted to ask the minister about telehealth. As the minister probably recalls, before she was the minister, we had quite a long discussion in the House about the cost of telehealth, the benefits, and how it worked. I think the previous minister might have even made a commitment to update us on how the telehealth system is working.

So my first question to the minister on telehealth, and it's also described on the business plan on page H-14 and it's part of the main estimates on page H-5: can the minister tell us today: what is the status of the telehealth network across Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Currently, all Nunavut communities are connected to the telehealth network and it's used for education, clinical activities, some visitation, and administration. So there's some of that. Those are the type of activities that are currently being applied towards the telehealth system.

The telehealth improved the quality of providing health care advice to clients that are providing that service in the communities. We are looking at further utilization of the telehealth system with our health centres. We need to work towards more utilization of it.

As it is right now, about 25 percent of the telehealth system is used for clinical activities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for her response.

I have a constituent, a family in Cambridge Bay who have a relative in a homecare facility outside of the territory. I believe the health department is using the telehealth for the family to stay in touch with the individual.

It works to a certain extent, but it is very trying on the family because the individual is in the out-of-territory facility, there is no family, and you can't touch or hug each other. It's

very difficult for the family and for him because there is a lot of crying and tears. It is one way to stay in touch with relatives. I don't think it will totally eliminate the need to have some family interaction. I believe your department offers one visit per year for a family to visit an out-of-territory relative.

That's just a comment there. Could the minister give us an idea of what the total cost of establishing the telehealth system ended up being? I know figures were tossed around last year but we never did get a final figure. Could the minister give us a number there please? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Internally, we funded \$3.5 million and the rest was covered through the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister.

Could you give us a final total cost figure on the telehealth, and then also give us an indication if the money from the federal government has been received to help pay for the telehealth system? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The total investment to establish the telehealth system in Nunavut cost \$10.1 million. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the minister tell us how the Department of Health is evaluating the telehealth system to measure its effectiveness in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In my former hat, I had made a commitment to members that we would evaluate the system, and that is still in the works.

We're looking at having that report completed by some time this summer. It is important to remember here that we needed to get the system up and running before we can evaluate it; get it up and running, then use the system, and then evaluate it.

So that work is under way and we're looking at sometime probably in this summer to complete the report. Some of the things that I mentioned earlier, it's used for education purposes. We can connect 15 health centres at once with the telehealth system, and some

clinical activities and some visitation from people in hospitals and whatnot to their home communities.

In terms of the report itself, that won't be done until some time this summer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that information. Will the minister commit to providing the Members of the House with a copy of that report as soon as it's available? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will commit to providing that report. Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister.

Can the minister also tell us: do other departments in the Government of Nunavut have access to the telehealth system in terms of using it for their communications purposes between the regions and perhaps out of the territory? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand other departments have access to the telehealth system, but again, health services would have priority in using that system. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that information. It's probably a good idea that it is made available to other departments, as and when they need it, with health being the priority of course.

The business plan on page H-14, it shows that the telehealth budget, Information Technology has decreased by almost \$700,000. Can the minister explain why there is a decrease? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The difference, the decrease of \$692,000, was a result of the transfer, the budget for PYs, one from each region; and a decrease in the equipment budget by \$500,000. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Aglukkaq. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that information. On business plan, page H-16, the priority for 2006-07 is further implementation of the e-Health Plan. Can the minister tell us again what the e-Health Plan is and how it relates to the telehealth network? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The e-Health Initiative, the department is focusing on implementing distance development that will allow us to track a number of types of service.

One example would be medical travel. Another one would be in the area of pharmacy lab services. It is a bit different than the telehealth system in that this e-Health Initiative is systems development internally for tracking and reporting our inventory or our usage, say, as an example, of medical travel. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that answer. It's probably a good idea to track medical travel given the high costs over the years. It spiralled out of control I think for awhile there, and we have to get that under control.

On page H-15 of the business plan, priorities for 2005-06, it says that the e-Health Plan is complete; implementation has begun for the first two of four phases. Can the minister explain what the four phases are and then update us on the implementation of the first two phases? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From what I understand, the report on the e-Health Initiative is completed. The implementation has yet to start. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Peterson.

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

Could the minister expand a little bit more? The plan says that it is completed, but there are four phases. Could you give us some detail as to what the four phases are? Again, it says right in your own business plan that implementation has begun for the first two phases.

So I'm taking that that work has begun if you are stating that in your business plan.  
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think, for clarification, the report was done. The implementation of the system has not begun. The system still needs to be developed.

So I will ask my deputy to respond to what those four phases are of this initiative. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Ramsden.

**Mr. Ramsden:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Implementation, as it's stated in the plan, speaks to implementing or getting the plan itself done.

So the very first phase was a detailed mapping out of all of the processes of care that go on in all of the areas of the department.

The second phase identifies the systems that we want to get developed first. And so those are the ones that the minister spoke of briefly; a system to track lab results and have them available for care providers; a system to track children in care; a system to track drug distribution in the health centres and prescriptions for patients.

So when we say implementation there, we have identified the system needs. And this year, within probably a month, we will go out and look for the actual systems that exist that we can consider buying. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Ramsden. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister and Mr. Ramsden for that information.

The government tabled a list of contracts last November and in that list of contracts was a listed contract for almost \$660,000 for the Digital Health Care Solutions and the money was to develop the e-Health Program. Could you give us an update on what exactly Digital Health Care Solutions did in terms of developing the e-Health Program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to ask the deputy to speak to the details of that report. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Ramsden.

**Mr. Ramsden:** Mr. Chairman, we used that company to help us develop the e-Health Strategy and the plans so they are the people that have actually worked with our staff to lay out all of the ideas, essentially the division, for what the e-Health System would look like over time.

So they have met with our staff, they have met with Health Infoway, which is the federal funding partner that's involved in this. They provided much of the expertise to help pull that plan together. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Ramsden. Could he give me a bit more clarity: when do you expect the e-Health Program to be fully implemented? Do they expect it to be implemented in 2006-07?

I guess there's further implementation of the e-Health Plan. It doesn't give an indication that it would be fully implemented. Could the minister tell us if it will be fully implemented? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know exactly when it will be fully implemented. Development of systems takes time. I would say that in the next five to ten years, we would have a full system for Nunavut related to health and social services.

At the same time, as we move forward in the recommendations of developing these systems to track information and whatnot, the system development will also require any financial investments depending on how we are doing internally, or when we require additional funding to develop those systems.

So that will all, again, depend on the phases that we are going through to fully implement any systems development for the Department of Health. It's not cheap; it will take time, resources, and staff to develop this system.

It is something that we are exploring and looking at: what those models or system could look like in trying to improve on various programs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman (interpretation):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that answer. Can the minister tell us that this plan that Digital Health Care Solutions developed in conjunction with the Department of Health; in the course of developing that program, did they prepare a cost benefit analysis to show that by investing this much money this year, and maybe some more money in the subsequent years in the long term, the minister said five

to ten years, leave that \$5 million in this whole program, are we going to save \$100 million, or \$50 million. Is that part of the planning? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I said earlier that the plan is done on what those pieces would look like. I'm being a bit cautious in that I don't want to move forward in the full implementation because we have not cost out what financial impacts this will have in developing a system for Health and Social Services. We need to slow down a bit and look at exactly what is affordable, in light of all the other priorities within the Department of Health.

At this point in time, I'd like to focus my resources and energy in improving other areas of the department, and slowing down a bit in the movement of developing systems. Systems are there to allow us means to report and track information better. At the same time, it is a fine balancing act internally with the resources that we have to also look at areas that are in need of attention, such as social workers, or whatnot.

I've asked my staff where we are at and to really focus the energy and resources where it is most needed at this point in time, and to slow down on internal systems development and focus on the areas where we need to focus in providing the frontline service to community level grassroots, and so on.

The cost analysis is not done at this point in time. We'll eventually keep the file moving, but at this point in time, my priority and emphasis in directing my resources and energy is to improve the quality of care and services that Health and Social Services provides on a daily basis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that explanation. I agree to some degree that they should focus on the people and not on internally. At the same time, over the years, since 1999, the cost of running the Department of Health has grown quite high; well over \$200 million now.

If we can find ways to make the Department of Health more efficient; the tracking of expenditures and medical travel and all those things; because we are in a unique area of Canada where we are so large; 26 communities that are totally reliant on airlines, and we are talking about telehealth.

We have to find ways and systems to help make us more efficient so that we can save money by eliminating inefficiencies, then we will have more money available to direct into the medical services to help our residents up here. I think we are in the situation where it's not very likely that we are going to keep getting more and more money from the federal government. We can't suck money out of all the other departments to support health. We need to find ways to make it more cost efficient, and work with what we have



and still deliver a high standard and quality of health services to the people that we represent.

So I urge the minister not to give up on finding efficiencies and programs to make the department more efficient, but to find that balance where you can become more efficient, at the same time, deliver the health services that we need in Nunavut.

I don't think I'm alone in stating that Health is probably the most important government department. I'm sure a lot of the ministers would disagree, but the Health Department touches everybody in the communities, so we have to find ways to make it work for everybody.

Not just to give more money, let's find out where we can save money so we can direct it again to providing medical services for the people that need that kind of help. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. I didn't hear a question there, but Madame Minister; if you want to respond to that, go ahead.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the comment from Mr. Peterson.

I agree, we need to keep moving forward in developing systems. We are focusing on systems development where I think it makes the most sense in providing quality healthcare services to Nunavummiut such as lab results, clinic scheduling systems, and pharmacy information.

And I think that's where we need to look at investing some of our resources in providing healthcare services to Nunavummiut, but at the same time, I also have to look at all the other priorities and pressure points the Department of Health is under in the areas of social work.

I also recognize that yes; we need to report our budgets. We need to report on our expenditures and so on. The system cannot focus all its energies in sacrifice of quality of care of services to Nunavummiut. It is a fine balancing act and that is the approach I am taking in trying to focus the resources that we have within the Department of Health.

I take the member's comments and advice and will continue to try and improve systems without sacrificing the services in other areas for Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madame Minister. We're on page H-5, 6, and 7. Directorate. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can't find what I mentioned yesterday or on other occasions under the business plan; international nurses.

Can the minister update us about if this will go ahead or what is the status of the international nurses at this time? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The information related to international nurses, we continued with that process of recruiting our international nurses and finalizing the orientation and the exams that the nurses have undertaken.

They wrote their Registered Nurses Association exams last week, I believe it was on February 10. The results are not with us at this point in time. Once that information is completed, then we'll look at the next steps and respond to those.

At the same time, I've asked to look at and evaluate how we're doing in our recruitment efforts and I've also asked that we also look at further efforts at recruiting nurses within Canada.

Until we give ourselves the time to evaluate the recruitment of the international nurses, so that's kind of where we are at this point in time.

At the same time, the Department of Health has invested a lot of energy into developing training programs in various areas such as social work, maternal midwifery, and so on.

One of the things I have directed my staff to look at is also some recruitment strategy in place for the graduates that will be coming out of those programs such as mental health and so on. It doesn't make any sense to me to invest training money and then not have a hiring plan in place to hire those people that graduate. So I would like the department and I have directed my staff to look at bridging and completing that circle in the hiring.

So with the international nurses, we are taking a bit of a pause in that to look at bridging our strategies a bit around the nursing program as an example here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the response, but I have a further question. I'm not at all too sure whether or not that international nurses recruiting initiative was successful or not. The reports that we have seen don't appear to indicate that this program was successful when 50 percent or more of them initially failed their nursing certification exam.

The minister indicated to the House at one point that they have retained the services of an agency to recruit, screen, and actually recommend individuals to come to this country. Why is it that these particular international nurses that have failed continue to enjoy their visas while at the same time enjoying payroll from this government and yet they have not

met the requirements of entering into Canada? Would the minister agree that this program is not all that successful as it was introduced and stated that this would relieve all of the shortages that we have in Nunavut? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Madam Minister Aglukkaq.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it would be premature to give up our efforts in recruitment.

The international nurses have three attempts to write a Registered Nurses Association exam. Canadians write the same exam and Canadians have also failed that same exam. We hire nurses from Canada to positions in Nunavut, they write the same exam and if they fail the exam, we give them another opportunity. The same would apply to beneficiaries who are in nursing programs in Nunavut but fail the exam; we would still give them the same option.

The fact of the matter is: we are in a major shortage with nurses in Canada. Last year alone, 4,000 graduated in Canada for nursing positions. So every effort that we take to filling the positions, we have to make those efforts. We need nurses in our communities; we don't have enough beneficiaries to fill those jobs. Until such time we have those vacancies filled will we slow down the process, but we have to continue with our efforts despite the challenges we face in the exam and so on.

So I think, in fairness to those individuals that we have recruited and that have made the commitment to work in Nunavut, we need to support the nurses in our communities and I support the hires that we have made. They are not treated any differently than any nurse that we would have hired from outside of our communities or outside of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. So the answer to my question is: yes, the program is successful and we will continue to recruit and hire international nurses. We will continue to put them on salaries before they are certified. We'll give them three chances to complete their exams and repeat their exams.

I've never heard that kind of benefit to fellow Inuit people in government. Normally, if we have Inuit nurses, they would only be considered nurses if they have completed their exams, otherwise, they are not paid as nurses. They would only probably be paid as one of the assistants, or whatever or what have you.

I'm asking the minister: the program, if we are to continue to finance it, does the minister not agree that we could probably look elsewhere to Europeans, and whatnot, where they may be able to have more consistent guidelines in terms of the nursing profession so that we could continue to provide vacancies in Nunavut where they are so badly needed? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Any nurse that we hire, they are offered a position, they accept it, they write the exam, and then we orient them. We don't give applicants the exams and orientation before they are put on payroll. We offer them a job; they accept the position.

Once they are on stream, they are on payroll; they go through the orientation and their exams, otherwise, we would be investing our resources in having people that have not accepted the positions in writing exams and so on. I think it's a matter of process. We need to continue with our efforts in recruitment. I mentioned earlier that we need to focus our recruitment in Canada, as well.

At the same time, I also mentioned earlier that we also need to look at building a better relationship with the students that are in the Nunavut Arctic College Nursing Program. We are investing in individuals in that program. I would like to see our department develop systems to recruit those individuals upon successful completion of the nursing program, including the exam. The process would still apply in that we are taking a cautious approach to this.

At the same time, international nurses are international nurses; it doesn't matter if they come from England, or Japan, or China; it doesn't matter, they are still international.

So we are looking at those options on a regular basis on how we can address our vacancies. We'll continue to do that until such time that we don't need nurses in our communities, but that will be a long time coming. We are taking a cautious approach to that, but the strategy must be more than just recruitment. It should also be in the area of training and recruiting the people that we are training within Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Yes, I perceived that. I fully understand and recognize that international means countries outside of the country. The reason I'm focusing on Asian nurses is because that is where the government initially targeted that region. Other countries did not have the benefit of any hiring agency; recruiting agency contracted particularly to Asian countries.

I'm asking the minister one last time. The question is: are we still continuing to have the services of the international recruiting agency to hire Asian nurses? Is that contract still in force? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The agency that we've contracted to do the recruitment, we've advised them, at this point in time, to focus on the 50 that have been hired to date. We want to evaluate those services; the initial 50 that we have recruited.

So again, I say that we are taking a cautious approach, but at the same time, we are focusing on the full completion of the 50 recruited. After that time, we will decide what our next options will be.

I should also say in the previous government, efforts were made to recruit in Australia. So there are other countries that we have recruited in the past, so it's not just this one country.

At this point in time, we are focusing really just to focus on the 50 and then decide from there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Yes, the question still is, if the 50 nurses that were recruited by the hiring agency, obviously 50 percent or more have already failed their first exam. What will happen if they fail the second time, and eventually the third time?

At the same, they are on our payroll and if they have not fully completed their certification requirements of the country to be given the status as a registered nurse within Canada, what will happen to those individuals? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think that I have stated many, many times that individuals who fail the RN cannot work as nurses in Canada. That applies to international nurses; that applies to Canadian nurses.

In this particular case, with this particular initiative, the arrangement we have with the firm that has assisted us in recruiting the international nurses, the obligation of that agency would be to find us the replacement of that person that failed the RN exam at their cost. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. I appreciate the minister's response providing more information as to what's happening with that because I have never even seen that the nurses are normally given a complete payroll package with the benefits before they have completed their certification requirements and they are still under our payroll. So that's the reason we were asking these particular questions.

I will leave it at that and we will be asking for an update further down the road once this Assembly continues the next time.

I have a last question with respect to the government's initiative. There's a brief statement in the business plan with respect to the Client and Medical Escort Policy.

I indicated yesterday that there were concerns that the elders have, mainly the fact that they are unable to communicate in English. They are unilingual and most of the time with the medical examinations that are occurring, they are normally completely not fully understanding in spite of the fact that there may be interpreters available.

The elders in our region particularly request the minister or the government to provide a relative as their medical escort when they are unilingual, and in certain conditions that require them.

So will the minister consider putting in place in the policy that the relative or for that matter, the spouses will be involved in recommending that the person does require a medical escort when they are medivaced or sent down to the hospitals down south?

At this moment, the policy says that only if the medical officer says that they require escorts, then they will do so, but our presentation to you is that the relatives are calling on the government to consider that advice be sought also from the relatives of the patients.

Would the minister confirm, yes or no, to this requirement? And if so, please provide a copy of the change of the policy to the Assembly. Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When it's being determined that an escort is required, normally the individual patient has that flexibility to decide who within the family or individual they want to travel with to wherever the service may be.

Having said all of that, there are a number of factors that are considered in deciding whether an escort is required. One is the ability of the person to travel independently, whether they are unilingual, disabled, and so on.

So there is that flexibility in that the family has choices. The individual has choices whether to have a family member accompany him or her to a centre, but the fact again, the decision leading to that involves a number of examinations, so I would like to keep it as open and as broad as I can in that.

Every case is different, and it's not a yes or a no response because every case and situation is different. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman**: Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that. At the same time, we all recognize that they are not all the same individuals and whatnot, but the level of inability to communicate is normally pretty clear-cut.

When you don't know how to communicate, many of you have never experienced that, but when a patient is unilingual and really not able to communicate in a certain language, which is your language, which you take for granted, it's very difficult. You have it made. You don't need that service.

So do I understand the minister said that you will not consider the advice of the relatives, whether in fact the patient requires a medical escort when they are medivaced to Southern hospitals? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I did not say that. I did not say that at all and I didn't say that wouldn't be considered.

I just said in deciding whether an escort is required there are a lot of other factors that are considered; not just the language, the disability or the ability to get from A and B. Those are all pieces that are considered, including minors, including children and babies.

So there are a lot of steps taken and guidelines that will be needed to ensure that there is consistency in how the policy is applied, and as much as possible, we try and apply that consistently.

In almost all cases of unilingual Inuktitut elders, escorts are provided, but I just want the member to be aware that there are other factors also. Some unilingual elders are comfortable traveling to Yellowknife, as an example, and don't always want an escort, but in some cases, they do.

So I'd like just an open mind that there are a lot of other pieces to consider, and in most cases, unilingual elders do have escorts. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madame Minister. You have 45 seconds, Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Mr. Chairman, I have one last point I want to make. It has been raised with the medical people as well as the previous ministers and so on that the medevac planes, particularly in our area in the Kivalliq Region...might be evaluation with some of the requirements of the contract that there are no washrooms on these medevac planes that normally fly from Repulse Bay, Coral Harbour to Winnipeg.

You know there is maybe a milk run between. Why is it the fact that they are not compelled by the contracting agency to abide by that rule, their argument had been "Oh, we are only flying between points with an hour and a half in between."

But the patients have said that their biology doesn't always comply with these hourly time limits that these airlines travel from A to B to C, and then eventually to D as the final destination.

Could the minister undertake to provide a somewhat positive response to the people and the patients of the Kivalliq region that they will look at these medevacs currently normally chartered by the department when patients have to be sent down to the hospital in Churchill or Winnipeg? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will look into that and evaluate the scheduled medical travel and contracts that we have to ensure that the service providers are meeting their contractual obligations that we have with them.

But having said that, I think it's also important to keep medevac separate from scheduled medical travel. So I will look into that and report back to the members and at the same time I have also committed to reporting the same information to the Member for Hudson Bay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will do that.

**Chairman:** Thank you Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page H-6 of the Main Estimates, the CHR Program for \$166,000, it's a program that trains individuals from the communities to work in the health and social services field.

Can the minister expand a little bit on that statement? How many people is the department planning to train, and further to that, is there a maximum number of CHRs that are required in each Nunavut community? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The idea originally was to train at least one, well maybe more than one, but the idea was to train individuals to take on the CHR position in every community. At that time, there was a CHR in most communities, I believe in Cambridge Bay, there are two positions there, and in most other communities, there is one.

The training program rotates from community to community. I believe last year, it was offered in Pangnirtung, but I am not sure where it is this year.

I am not exactly sure if that's the information that you are looking for, but the idea was to train individuals to work in the CHR positions in the Department of Health and the investment was made to develop the training program through Arctic College to maximize that opportunity for people in a community that want to go into that field. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.



**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Minister. That does somewhat answers my question. A few years ago when I was with the Hamlet of Cambridge Bay, there was a CHR course in Cambridge Bay. I think there were eight or nine CHRs on the course and they appeared before the hamlet council one evening, the entire group, the entire class.

They were asking for our political support to write a letter to the Government of Nunavut to ask them to create jobs for them in the various communities. We also took that up with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities. I think some of the CHRs did eventually receive employment; there are two ladies in Cambridge Bay doing a fine job for us.

But we were wondering if there was a mandatory requirement that is based on population that there should be one, or two, or three CHRs in every community. And if so, do you see your department fulfilling those staffing requirements?

These are people right from your community, people that know the people, where there would be some continuity with the patients and the communities, and that they are not nurses that come from down south that don't know anybody unless they stay around for three or four years.

So these CHRs, I think, are very valuable and important health professionals that can help improve the health delivery in their communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was going to an earlier question today in regard to completing the circle and it relates to the number of training programs in the health field.

Right now, we have training programs in nurses, social workers, mental health, CHRs, and so on. That's one of the areas that I have directed my staff to revisit and develop ways to hire those individuals completing their training programs directly to health care professions. If we are going to invest money in the training, we also have to put in the efforts to recruit those individuals to the jobs within the Department of Health.

Having said that, one of the other areas that I have asked to look at from within the department is to examine our complements of staff such as social workers and whether we need to increase those numbers based on the growth of population of various communities. So it's one that has not been done, but it's one that I think needs attention. They do provide a very critical role.

One of the other areas that I have identified as a priority in the department is to develop a Public Health Strategy on prevention and these positions play a very, very critical role in getting that information out to communities.

Having recognized that, we are examining the number of positions by community. They are not mandatory positions, but we recognize that they have a critical role in providing services at the community level. So we are not there yet, but it's an area that we need to examine and examine whether we require more than one position in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Aglukkaq. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that response from the minister. The CHRs from this graduating class are a pretty close-knit group and they have remained in close contact for several years.

I mentioned to the minister the other day or yesterday that there are three CHRs in the Kitikmeot who are looking for work. The unemployed CHRs have told the employed CHRs that they would like to be treated like CHRs, they would like to find work with the Department of Health in their community. I think it would be sad if they couldn't find work in the field that they trained for.

I would urge the minister to look closely at finding work for not only those CHRs, but CHRs anywhere in Nunavut where they are available and willing to work for the Department of Health because I have stated and the minister just supported them as playing a critical role in the delivery of health in the communities. I will leave the CHRs with the minister; I think you will understand where I'm coming from with that.

On the same page, Mr. Chairman, on page H-6 of the main estimates, there are Committees of Council and these were set up I think in the year 2000. I think they were more or less to replace health boards, so instead of having a regional health board you would have a community...well, we call them health committees, but you call them Committees of Council in the main estimates.

They were established to form a link between the community and the Department of Health. We would have members from the community; elders, youth, and volunteers that sit on the committee, and have interaction with the Department of Health officials on issues affecting our communities.

I remember at the time, one of the former Ministers of Health that is in the House today, I asked him what the roles of the health committees are. He said that they have a very important role that they would link with the community, but if they couldn't get things done, then they could talk with the mayor, which at the time was myself, and then I could contact the minister, which was him, and then things would start to happen. It has been very successful in Cambridge Bay over the years. The committee would be up and down.

I'd like to get an idea from the minister of today how effective these Committees of Council, Health Committees, whatever they are known by in the communities or by the government; how effective they are in improving the health and education and the delivery of health programs in the communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the member for raising that question because this is one area that I think is so important and one area that I think has been under-utilized.

Since June of last year, I had an opportunity to meet with every chair of the Committees of Council. I met with the chairs in the Kivalliq in September, and in the Kitikmeot I met with the chairs in October, and December the fourth, I met with all the Baffin Committee of Council chairs.

The purpose of those meetings was to discuss the roles of each of the committees by community. Some of the committees are more active than some other communities. Some of them are proactive in dealing with setting priorities as to what areas they want to address for prevention, and so on. Not every community was at that stage.

Also, I was not hearing what some of those committee members were doing. One of the things that I wanted to do, by meeting with each of those chairs, was to examine how we can strengthen their role at the community level in the delivery of some of our priorities, particularly around prevention, education, and so on.

At the same time, to utilize that group to identify what some of the community priorities are in the area of prevention, and so on. They're all over the map in terms of where they were at. The feedback that I received from the committee members was fairly consistent across the board in that we needed to bridge closer the role of the committees with what we are doing through the health centres, through the CHRs, and so on.

Again, in some communities, the committees functioned under municipalities; in some communities they don't. So we had to recognize that there was a bit of difference in structure. They have come forward with recommendations on ways to strengthen their roles. That will be used to upgrade or revise the terms of reference and how they operate.

At the same time, internally, we needed to look at our operations with the three regions, how we're structured in providing the support to each of these Committees of Council, or what relationship we've stayed with the Committees of Council. That work is still progressing.

With initiatives that I've identified in the business plan will be projects such as the public health strategy, prevention, and so on. We hope to engage those committees in setting not

just those committees, but as many citizens as possible in coming forward with what some of those strategies or priorities may be. That work is still underway.

I would like for us to utilize that group more effectively within the organization, whether it be in the area of providing services in social services, or in healthcare, but also to come up with suggestions or recommendations where we need to focus on real grassroots community issues in the delivery of healthcare. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister, and I appreciate that answer.

I think in the Kitikmeot region, there is some concern in some corners that the regional health boards should come back. It came up at the Kitikmeot Inuit Association AGM, I think, in Kugluktuk about a year and a half ago. There was a resolution.

I think that was in response to concerns that people didn't feel the Department of Health was listening to their issues, and they wanted more control and direction over the delivery of health programs and services in the region.

I know at the time, and I mentioned earlier, the committees of council were set up to form the transition from the health boards that the government dissolved because they were too expensive I guess at the time, and were replaced with these Committees of Council.

The people in the Kitikmeot who passed the resolution would like to be assured that the Department of Health is going to work very closely with these Committees of Council and support them and give them some real powers to effect some change, health program delivery in the Kitikmeot Region and not just pay lip service to their recommendations or ideas.

If the minister could give me some sort of indication in that regard. I'm sure it's probably the same across Nunavut, wherever the committees of council exist. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the member's comments.

One thing, to share my thoughts in terms of what I think we need to do in the organization to strengthen our relationship with the community in addressing healthy communities, there is no doubt when the boards were dissolved, there was some disconnection from communities.

Through the board membership, there were mechanisms in place to receive the feedback. I don't believe going back to the board structure is the solution in getting at the grassroots issues of healthcare or social services.

With that, some of the things that I have been thinking about and trying to deal with in my head as to how we can strengthen our relationships better with each community because I really think that within the department, if we're going to address health, we need to start focusing our energy and resources in keeping people healthy.

One of the means to plug into the communities as a department on those grassroots issues was to strengthen the roles of the Committees of Council that were established when the boards were dissolved. I think in the early start up, there was a bit of a hiccup in terms of that role and the function that those committees played.

I strongly believe that by focusing our resources in reviewing the terms of reference of those councils and strengthening their role that that will become one of the means for us as a department to plug into some of the priorities of each of the communities and so on, but we also needed to take that one step further in the department in that we needed to position the department in each region to also have a relationship with each of those committees in the communities. As it has been, they were left to function on their own and report on an ad hoc basis on how they were doing.

Some communities have done very well and one example, the one I know of, is Cambridge Bay's model and they have been very active through the hamlet, through their wellness centre and so on, but that involved a very strong commitment and support from the municipality in that they made wellness their top priority. A community like Cambridge Bay is a model that we can share with communities and not every community is there.

One of the things that I have tasked my department is to try and fix the process of providing the support and receiving those feedbacks on a regular basis from the Community of Councils because that's the only way we can stay plugged in, not just from the angle of when people are sick, but rather on the ideas of where we should be focusing our energies in the area of prevention.

So that work is still progressing and I can only see a positive feedback coming from the Committees of Council, some of the challenges will continue to be there, but it allows us a means to receive the feedback on a regular basis as an organization to continue to focus our resources and energy where it's most needed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madam Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that explanation. Can the minister tell me how many Committees of Council exist in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's a committee in every community in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister. How much funding does each Committee of Council receive for their operations? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The total funding I believe is \$200,000 and that varies by community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister. If the Committees of Council wants to retain the services of some experts to help them do a special project, where would they turn to for additional funding? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Depending on the project itself, I think some Committees of Council have been active in accessing funding through youth projects, as an example, or elder projects to pay contributions, but depending on that, if it is health related, then it would have to come through the regional office and we would look to see where we would be able to provide that assistance to that committee. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no more questions.

**Chairman:** Thank you. We are on page H-5, H-6, and H-7. Health and Social Services. Branch Summary. Directorate. A short question, Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Very, very short. Thank you. Could the minister or his officials outline the Nunavut Arctic College program CHR?

It's not all that clear to me exactly which program funds individuals and communities. It also says, "Teaching communities to improve lifestyle." I'm not at all too sure that they can achieve that with that amount of money.

So could the minister give us an example of what type of venues they use to...I know it's an important program, but I think it is under-funded. I'm not sure whether all the

committees if they contributed, received funding from that contribution fund. Could the minister at least explain to us about how successful that program is? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's unfortunate that he wasn't here when I explained that earlier, but I'll do it again. The Community Health Representative Program originally, when it was designed, it was designed to try have at least one CHR position in every community. The program is offered in different communities every year. Last year, I believe it was in Pangnirtung and I think this year it's here.

The program is delivered through Nunavut Arctic College. I can get the program guidelines for the member, and I think it's also available through the college booklet.

The idea was to train individuals as CHRs for positions within every community in Nunavut. Most communities have at least one CHR. I've committed to re-examining the positions, not only just this position, but in social work, as an example; the impact that population growth has had in our communities in the service industry side. So that is in the works.

I don't know if that answers the member's question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): I'd like to thank the minister for providing that information. Is my question too short?

**Chairman** (interpretation): No. (interpretation ends) We are on page H-5, H-6, and H-7. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$22,154,000. Do you agree?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** H-8, that includes H-9 and H-10. Healthy Children, Families and Communities. Mr. Kilabuk.

**Mr. Kilabuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In H-8, it's very difficult to say. First of all, I'd like to welcome the minister and her officials.

In the Pangnirtung dialect, I will be asking some questions on social workers because they do heavy work; very stressful. Even though it is costing a lot of money, we can make improvements. In Pangnirtung, with the population growing, of course I know that their jobs are very stressful, but I regret to say I don't know what the other community situations are so I can't make a comparison from one community to my community of the social workers.

I'm pretty sure other communities are like that. They have a heavy workload and there are two social workers. Those two social workers try and deal and help the people in the community with problems, and have appointments and they have to try and prevent things. They have to make reports to the courts, and they have to deal with family violence. There are a lot of different things that they have to deal with. It becomes very stressful.

I want to know if they can be supported further. If that's only the case in Pangnirtung, I'm not sure. I wonder if they can at least be supplied with an office support worker for making photocopies, answering phones, and doing the correspondence.

If they can get an assistant in the office because they have to deal with a lot of things and we heard that in this House, it was mentioned that even though they have a very stressful job that we don't show enough recognition to them. To show them appreciation for what they have done, maybe we can provide them with an office assistant.

My question is: the social workers in Pangnirtung, is that the only case?

I believe there should be an office worker in the offices because the social workers...I want your department to check to see if they can get an office worker in their office. Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kilabuk. I would just like to remind everybody that when somebody is talking, please try not to disrupt. If you have to meet, go have a chance to talk because when there are people talking around, it gets very distracting, and the person asking the question and the person who is listening can't really hear each other. Thank you, Mr. Kilabuk. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank my colleague, Mr. Kilabuk.

In terms of the member's concern in regard to the holistic approach as far as social services is concerned, we want to help the social workers because of their workload. In terms of when the Government of Nunavut was formed in 1999, there were a lot of barriers that these social workers had to face, but now their barriers have seemed to lessen.

We still continue and want to continue supporting our social workers. They have a tremendous workload. This is something that we want to continue working on. So I'll continue to communicate with my colleagues in terms of how we are supporting our social workers because it is a tremendously stressful job.

In terms of Pangnirtung, we want to, as far as I'm concerned as the minister, I want to work with the communities in terms of supporting our social workers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.



**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Kilabuk.

**Mr. Kilabuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the minister for recognizing that there should be an office worker. Before she changes her mind, I'll move on to something else.

This is very interesting to hear; on H-10, for the council, I think it deals with the Embrace Life Council. Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kilabuk. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: I don't think there was a question.

**Chairman** (interpretation): I apologize. Yes, we are page H-8, H-9, and H-10. Mr. Kilabuk.

**Mr. Kilabuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I try and support the council as much as I can; the Council for the Disabled. My question is, as I raised it earlier, people, in regard to the motorized wheelchairs.

If we are to provide them with motorized wheelchairs, would that council be included if they're going to make changes, or would it be done just by the Department of Health and Social Services? Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kilabuk. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The wheelchairs are covered through the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, based on patient need. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Kilabuk.

**Mr. Kilabuk**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess just very shortly then, if the department is going to revisit the issue of wheelchairs and looking at providing the disabled with motorized wheelchairs, will the department allow the input from the Council for the Disabled on that and other issues surrounding disabilities and their equipment? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kilabuk. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm open to hearing recommendations or suggestions from individuals that require equipment of this nature, and am willing to work with any agency and work with the Non-Insured Health Benefit Program to include some of the equipment that is needed by individuals with disabilities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Kilabuk.

**Mr. Kilabuk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll end my questions there, but I thank the minister and staff for the response. Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. We're on pages H-8, H-9, and H-10. Healthy Children, Families and Communities. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$42,410,000. Do you agree? Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to ask the minister about dental care.

I see on page H-17 of the business plan, the budget for dental services decreased by a small amount. Last summer Mr. Chairman, residents from my riding and residents from Kugluktuk had to come to Iqaluit for dental treatment.

It was very difficult and we discussed that in the House in November. There is a large backlog of dental care patients across Nunavut. I would like the minister to give me an idea of where Nunavut stands in terms of working their way through the huge backlog of dental patients that require surgery. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just looking through my notes. I recall the concerns of the members traveling from the Kitikmeot traveling to Iqaluit for dental. The backlog at that time was quite high. As it is in 2004-05, we've worked...there are approximately 747 clients that are on the waiting list for dental restoration, extractions, and are being treated. That is a significant improvement from previous years.

What we were trying to do at that time was because there was such a long waiting list to get the treatments in Yellowknife, or Hay River, or one of those places, we had made arrangements to try and utilize these dental services here in Iqaluit to try and address the long list of individuals now waiting. Other services are provided in Churchill, Hay River, as well as Yellowknife. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that information. Can the minister tell me how many of those 747 folks are from the Kitikmeot? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In 2005-06, we've dealt with 104 patients from the Kitikmeot for dental. The number of people that are waiting right now are 44. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that information. Is it still the intention of the government to bring the 44 people on the list to Iqaluit for dental surgery if they require it? Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Any new cases are screened and they are prioritized for the type of treatment that the individual would need. We would try and get that service at the nearest centre if possible, whether that would be in Yellowknife or here, depending on, again, whether those services are available. So a bit of a combination of different things that we need to look at but the idea is to provide the service. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not to dwell on this too much longer, but I've received clearer direction from my constituents that they don't like to come to Iqaluit for dental surgery. After the folks that came here last summer had their difficulties, the word spread in Cambridge Bay that it wasn't a very pleasant experience. People are asking me why they can't get dental treatment in the Kitikmeot. If they can't get it there, why can't they get dental treatment in Yellowknife? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The individuals that traveled from the Kitikmeot to Iqaluit required surgery. There are dentists that travel to each community, based on our contracts, but the particular individuals that travel to Iqaluit for treatment required surgery that we couldn't get from the Northwest Territories. We couldn't get the surgery time slot through Stanton for those services, so we chartered the individuals to come to Iqaluit for that treatment.

The treatment itself, the surgery was good service. There were a few glitches at the airport, but the quality of service provided to those individuals in surgery is, in my opinion, excellent.

We have to try and balance the need of the patient and the timing that patient requires in medical attention and had we not chartered the aircraft to Iqaluit, those individuals would wait at least two years for that treatment in the Northwest Territories based on the backlog.

And the other thing, we talk about the issue about 'Closer to Home.' We are trying to examine services that are available within Nunavut to Nunavummiut. So attempts are being made to try and provide more services in Nunavut and that is one of them.

So, again, I think what I need to clarify is that this particular treatment required, it was a surgery treatment, and the dental team does travel to various communities. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that information.

I suppose part of the solution would be, as you mention in your main estimates, dental activities that include promotion and treatment. So before they have to travel for dental surgery, a lot of that could be prevented if there's a little bit of education or promotion about the dangers of not looking after your teeth.

I know the minister handed out, I think there was a kit there in November that we all took back to our ridings; toothbrushes and things like that and some educational material.

Can the minister comment on how that program is working in terms of educating parents to look after their children's teeth so that they can avoid unnecessary surgery at such a young age? I say young age because some of the kids that had to come over here were very young; two and three years old. That's very young for dental surgery. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are currently two pilot projects related to...I believe that kit that we distributed and those are one in the Keewatin and one in Igloolik.

The whole prevention side, again, is very important and we try and provide as much information as we can on prevention through our CHRs and this is where we go back to the role of the community health representatives, the role of the committees of council in promoting healthy living, healthy lifestyle, but also the prevention of issues like this.

It's a concern to us in that over 200 kids a year still need surgery within Nunavut and we are trying to address that through prevention and education of mothers and young mothers and so on. We are focusing our energies to try and get that information out. But it's an ongoing effort.

We hope that we never have to have children go through surgery, but it's something that...we are not there yet and we will continue to work and develop programs and prevention plans. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that answer. I'm wondering if I could get some information on social workers in Nunavut. I wonder if the

minister could give me an idea of how many social workers are required in Nunavut. We have 25 communities; how many social workers would be required in all those 25 communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I spoke earlier in regard to reviewing the workload of every social worker. The numbers that we have by community in Nunavut have not changed since 1999. That is a concern that I have in that we need to examine the work that those social workers are carrying in relation to the population growth that we are experiencing in Nunavut.

I think that that is an area that it's very important that we look at and I had directed my staff to start examining, not only the workload, but the compensation to those individuals.

As it is right now, there's no magic formula that is used to allocate the number of social workers by community, or by population, or by caseload, and so on. It is something that we need to examine internally to ensure that the workload and cases handled by our social workers is somewhat consistent across the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Aglukkaq. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that information. I have a copy of the Annual Report of the Director of Child and Family Services 2004-05.

In there, Mr. Norman Murray, he commented on social services' big picture. Approximately 51 front line staff and supervisors serve all of Nunavut. There are also administrative supervisors of each key base staff; program heads, and senior management who support us. Frontline staff and supervisors are exceptionally busy given the many and varied duties that a social worker is expected to deliver; adoptions, guardianship, family violence response, response to suicidal ideation, services to aged and/or infirmed, child protection, foster care services, and community correction services.

When I read that I was astounded that a social worker has to do all that, and probably be on call 24/7. It hit home that this is probably one of the reasons why we have such a high turnover of social workers in Nunavut. It is very difficult to keep some social workers longer than six to 12 months.

The concern in many communities that I traveled to is that people don't see a social worker. There's no continuity developed. A new social worker comes in and they don't know the community; they don't know the people. It's a big concern in my community and I'm sure in other communities.

I am wondering if the minister could comment on how the department would like to see, or strive to see the turnover of social workers be reduced so that communities are not left

without coverage, particularly during the critical times of the year. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The report that is produced by the Superintendent of Child Welfare, under statutory requirements, does not paint a good picture of some of the challenges that we face. Recognizing that the challenges that we face within our social workers, I think we need to address that whole issue on many fronts.

First of all, the focus of healthy communities involves many things. It is not just one department's responsibility to develop a healthy community. Everyone has a role in promoting healthy communities or active living, or whatnot.

So it's so broad and involves many partners, including Education, Justice, or the communities, or the hamlets, youth, and so on. I'm saying that because the preventions side has to be a piece that we also put resources in, whether it be healthy lifestyle, but also promoting healthy lifestyles in the community level to try and minimize the challenges that we are challenged with within the system.

The issue around the high turnover of social workers, I think I spoke to earlier in that we need to examine, first of all, the functions carried out by the social workers and examine the population growth in relation to the work that's carried out, the cases, and so on.

There is no magic formula at this place in time. The numbers pretty much remained the same in terms of social workers. And we need to examine all of those pieces to address retention, to address training, to address support, to address a number of things, but I recognize that that is an issue and that is an area that I think we need to do better in.

I mentioned earlier that we need to focus our energies on what we do well, but we also have to focus our energies in what we are not doing well. This is an area that I think requires our attention and I am completely committed to that.

Part of it will also be to talk to individuals that deliver this service on a regular basis and hear firsthand the challenges they feel and the support they need to carry out their jobs, whether it be logistics, as mentioned by Member Kilabuk, whether it would be administrative support to the social workers in each community, but not only that, I think we also have to examine what support or assistance we give to positions that are transferred to hamlets. We transfer positions to municipalities, but we cannot disconnect our connection to those individuals that provide social work services on behalf of us through the municipalities.

So there's a bigger, broader issue that needs to be examined and we can't continue to look at it in pieces, but we need to also look at how we can work with those groups within the department in the community and how they can better work together, whether

it be mental health workers, the translation requirements they may need to do their jobs and so on.

So I am committed to examining that and I look forward to reporting those findings because I think it's important also for Nunavummiut and members to be aware of the amount of work these individuals and these professionals provide on our behalf in child welfare cases and so on.

Unfortunately, those numbers are going up, I wish they were going down, but our social challenges are great and we have to respond by reviewing our caseloads, but at the same time, focusing our energy and resources in the area of prevention. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Aglukkaq. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that reply. Mr. Murray made an interesting comment in that section where he said the social workers provide community corrections services. I think that probably puts them in a bit of a conflict with some of their other duties.

If you have a situation where a social worker is probably acting as a parole officer for some individuals in the community where they were involved in some of these other things like family violence or maybe some other criminal activity where they served time, came back, and they are on parole.

I'm wondering how the social worker separates that function in their mind; from being a social worker then becoming a parole officer, community corrections officer; if the minister could comment on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madam Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How does the social worker separate the two functions in their mind? I can assume that they're dealing with an individual under different circumstances and respond accordingly, depending on the victim, or the patient, or the client, or whatever.

Again, that concern has been raised by the social workers and it is an area that we need to examine. The only way we can get to address those issues is to seek and speak to the professionals in those jobs for recommendations also.

I won't be able to come up with that, but I want to hear, firsthand, from those individuals that provide that service. Yes, they do provide probation services and so on. That will involve speaking to the Department of Justice in terms of workloads and so on.

At this point in time, I can only say that that is an area that has been expressed and we will be reviewing those recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister. How many social workers across Nunavut would actually be performing community correction services? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. From time to time, the social workers, at one point in time, will be required to provide those services through the agreement that we have with the Department of Justice. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madame Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister. The agreement that you have with the Department of Justice, do they pay some of the salary O&M to support the social worker/community corrections officer? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have to thank the Minister of Justice for providing all this information. From what I understand in terms of the arrangement is if there is a high caseload of people that require probation services; they have a dedicated person. Where there are no high caseloads that function is carried out by social workers through the arrangement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to touch on Foster Care on page H-19 in the business plan. Could you give me an update on what the foster care rates are currently for Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Madame Minister.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you allow me, I'd like to recognize the clock and report back on those rates tomorrow. I don't have that information in front of me so I can commit to providing that tomorrow. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. While you are at the witness table, Mr. Kilabuk wanted to make a comment. Mr. Kilabuk.

**Mr. Kilabuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since we are pressed for time, I would like to recognize the clock and report progress. Thank you.



**Chairman** (interpretation): There is a motion on the floor to report progress and it's not debatable. All those in favour of the motion. All those opposed. (interpretation ends) The motion is carried. I will now rise to report progress.

Thank you, Madame Minister and your officials. We'll see you tomorrow.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Item 21. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Arreak.

### **Item 21: Report of the Committee of the Whole**

**Mr. Arreak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 12 and the main estimates and would like to report progress. Also, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): There is a motion on the floor. Who seconds the motion? Ms. Aglukkaq. The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. Abstained. The motion is carried.

Item 22. Third Reading of Bills. Item 23. Order of the Day. Mr. Clerk.

### **Item 22: Orders of the Day**

**Clerk** (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A reminder for meetings tomorrow: at nine o'clock in the morning, the Standing Committee for Government Operations and Accountability in the Tuktu Boardroom, followed by the meeting of the regular caucus at eleven o'clock in the Tuktu Boardroom.

Orders of the Day for March 2:

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 the Committee of the Whole
22. Third Reading of Bills
23. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): The House stands adjourned until Thursday, March 2 at 1:30 in the afternoon.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 18:14*

