



Nunavut Canada

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT

4th Session

2nd Assembly

HANSARD

Official Report

DAY 9

Friday, March 16, 2007

Pages 402 – 456

Iqaluit

Speaker: The Honourable James Arreak, M.L.A.

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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(Pangnirtung)

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(Rankin Inlet North)

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(Cambridge Bay)

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Friday, March 16, 2007**

Members Present:

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

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. James Arreak)(interpretation): I would like to ask Mr. Alagalak to say the opening prayer.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Good morning, Mr. Premier, Ministers, Members of the Legislative Assembly, and Nunavummiut. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Minister Aglukkaq.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 028 – 2(4): Birthing Center in Rankin Inlet

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (interpretation): Good morning. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the birthing centre in Rankin Inlet is a success story that few in Nunavut know about. Thanks to this innovative service, many Nunavummiut can have their babies closer to home.

Since this started in October of 1993, some 451 babies have been delivered by midwives and maternal care workers at the centre.

>>*Applause*

They were all successful deliveries. Kivalliq women with high risk pregnancies give birth in Winnipeg or Churchill.

This is a positive experience not just for the moms and their families but for the Department of Health and Social Services. Each baby delivered by the birthing centre saves government approximately \$10,000 compared to the cost of delivering outside.

Most Kivalliq women are choosing to use the birthing centre. We had 42 births in the centre last year, a 33 percent increase over 2005. While this trend is expected to continue, there will be a limit given our resources and capacity of this system.

Mr. Speaker, I ask MLAs to join with me in thanking the staff of the birthing centre, in particular the founding mother, Nowyah Williams, for their years of dedicated support for the Kivalliq mothers and their families. I wish them every success for the years to come. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' Statements. Minister Picco.

Minister's Statement 029 – 2(4): Grade Three Criterion Math Test

Hon. Ed. Picco (interpretation): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) One of the best ways to maintain academic standards is through ongoing student assessments as part of our instruction in our schools.

During the past year we have been working with our schools and District Education Authorities on school improvement plans. The purpose of the school improvement plan is to establish regular ongoing ways of doing business in the schools.

The District Education Authorities, parents and community members enhance student growth, success, and processes. They collectively examine what is going well in the community school and how to expand on best practices and successes to address challenges.

The overall objective of the school improvement plan is to enable every student to be a successful learner. As part of the school improvement plan, we will be developing criterion standard tests for grade three, six, and nine math as well as grade four and seven language arts.

Criterion reference tests are based on the curriculum used and tests student knowledge and skills. From the results of the test, we will be able to enhance program and curriculum development processes, share information on student learning and have a method of tracking student progress over a period of time.

I am pleased to announce to my colleagues today that the grade three criterion math test is now completed and will be implemented in Nunavut schools this April. This test has been designed here in Nunavut with input from Nunavut educators and is just one part of our student assessment.

This is the first criterion test to be administered in Nunavut schools. Please join with me in wishing our students and our teacher's success in implementation of the test and future assessment processes in our schools. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Ministers' Statements. Minister Simailak.

Minister's Statement 030 – 2(4): Small Craft Harbours Report

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I want to bring to the attention of this House the Nunavut Small Craft Harbours Report that I will be tabling today.

There is a great deal of interest in this report from the members, especially from those seven communities for which harbour improvement had been recommended. This report was started in 2004 by an intergovernmental committee, which includes the Government of Nunavut, as represented by my department, and the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans to develop, in partnership, harbour facilities in Nunavut.

A significant portion, however, of the costs of development of harbours in Nunavut will have to be borne by the federal government. My department will continue to work with our federal counterparts to identify funding sources for development of small craft harbours in Nunavut. I will continue to urge Minister Hearn to take action to ensure we can benefit fully from our fisheries.

This is one of many areas in which we look to the federal government to support us and ensure that in Nunavut, like the rest of Canada, we have the physical infrastructure we need in our communities to develop our economy and increase our self-reliance.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Item 3. Members' Statements. Mr. Arvaluk.

Item 3: Members' Statements**Member's Statement 056 – 2(4): Gratitude for Housing Constructions**

Mr. Arvaluk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since today is Friday, I would like to first, before I say anything, thank the member, our colleague, Mr. Mapsalak, on behalf of the MLAs, for feeding us frozen meat, he is a good cook.

>>Applause

It is very rarely that the members and ministers are given gratitude from our constituencies. I would like to read a short letter thanking the Minister of Nunavut Housing Corporation from Moses Koonark, Chairman of the Pond Inlet Housing Association:

“I would like to take this opportunity to show my gratitude to you while I am the chair of the Pond Inlet Housing Association for a five-plex unit apartment we received from the Nunavut Housing Corporation in conjunction with the government of Nunavut. As you

may be aware, we have a shortage of public housing for our people and this five-plex will help tremendously as there are between 42 to 50 people on the waiting list that have applied for public housing for themselves and their families.

We, the Pond Inlet Housing Association, have also received notice, again, that we will be receiving two more five-plex units this summer as part of the Nunavut Housing Trust Project that the federal government provided for the Nunavut government in the past. Again, I would like to thank you very much for providing us with these units.

Moses Koonark, Chairman of the Pond Inlet Housing Association.” Thank you.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. (interpretation ends) Members’ Statements. Member for the High Arctic, Mr. Barnabas.

Member’s Statement 057 – 2(4): Birthday Wishes

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to wish the Member for Akulliq happy birthday as he’s going to be 25 years old today or 24 years old tomorrow. And all of the other people who are going to be celebrating their birthdays, I would like to extend them a happy birthday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. (interpretation ends) Members’ Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet North, Mr. Curley.

Member’s Statement 058 – 2(4): Improvement of Lives of Nunavummiut for the Next Generation

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Speaker for giving us a feast about a month ago. We haven’t had an extension or an invitation from then on.

I rise today to inform the listeners out there and the Members of the Legislative Assembly, especially the young people that even though our ancestors went through a hard life and went through hardship, kept persevering. They had a focus to keep going to the future. They looked at ways on how they can make improvements in their life so that it would be better for their children and their children’s children.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, our ancestors looked at how they could improve and how they could gain richness for the next generation and the next generations to come. For many, many years we have heard that the Inuit have been living up here for thousands and thousands of generations.

Today, even our government is saying that the government started this so we can’t do it, or it was initiated by some other government, or the federal government, or some other

entity that the Inuit can't do it. If we're going to be saying that, then there would be no hope for our younger generation.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, and because our ancestors looked at how they can make improvements to make it better for the future generation, I would like to say that even if you're told that it is impossible, there is nothing impossible because we have made it this far. If there are some improvements on how we can solve our problems we would do so.

Mr. Speaker, 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. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): I wanted to complete my statement.

We have to keep urging our youth and not say that it's somebody else's problem. Qangualuk was saying that Qangualuk was a very brave man who went to Cape Dorset by dog team. He looked at how he could make improvements in what he's going to start for the summer or the winter; he got some tools from there and brought it back to his community.

There are a lot of challenges that you're going to come across in your life, in our lives and the young peoples' lives but let us not forget what was said to me; anything is possible. We can rectify any problem and that's been with me for a very long time. The Member for Arviat told me that anything can be overcome.

So I would like to urge the members to make sure that they keep this in their hearts. Justice has to be brought back up here and we have to get the information out there to make sure that whatever wrongs have been done in the past are rectified today.

I would like to thank the viewers out there for giving me this knowledge. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Members' Statements. Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Peterson.

Member's Statement 059 – 2(4): Inuit Special Constables

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to inform the House about an important initiative underway in Cambridge Bay to recognize the contributions of Inuit Special Constables who served with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Mr. Speaker, well-respected resident Johnny Lyall, himself a retired Special Constable, raised the concern with me that former Inuit Special Constables from Cambridge Bay were not properly recognized with RCMP headstones when they were placed to rest in our cemeteries.

Inuit Special Constables provided valuable services to the RCMP and Canada for many decades as guides, interpreters and translators, among their other duties. Their contributions to making their communities safer places in which to live for their fellow citizens are appreciated.

In recognition of their contributions, Mr. Lyall undertook to ensure that the memories of the Inuit Special Constables from Cambridge Bay and the Kitikmeot are honoured by the placement of RCMP headstones at their graves.

Mr. Lyall has completed his research for Cambridge Bay and provided me with the names of four former Inuit Special Constables. The RCMP have told me that once they have these names they will search their archives in Ottawa and advise us of the next steps. The typical turnaround time to have a RCMP headstone prepared is six to nine months.

A career in law enforcement should be an option open to all of our youth. It is good to see more young Inuit applying to serve with the RCMP.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the House to join me in expressing our gratitude to Mr. Lyall for his personal efforts on behalf of the former Inuit Special Constables to honour their contributions to our territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet South/Whale Cove, Ms. Brown.

Member's Statement 060 – 2(4): Happy Birthday Wishes

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to send my greetings to Rankin Inlet and Whale Cove.

Yes, we have an individual who has a birthday in the middle of March, who's an elder in Rankin Inlet. I'm not too sure exactly what date her birthday is but it's some time in the middle of March. Jerome Tattuinee, I wish you a happy birthday and have a great day. I hope your wife will serve you tea and when you go to bed, serve you some coffee.

Yes, we have to thank and remember our elders because the elders used to say, "Be kind to the people who are kind to you." So this has great meaning to me and I'm sure it has a great meaning to you, too. The advice of the elders; we can't forget the advice we receive from the elders and we have to remember them because they brought us to this day.

So I would like to thank all the elders. If it wasn't for the elders I wouldn't be here and I'm sure my future would not be as bright. Due to proper advice given to me we get a good future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Brown. Members' Statements. Member for Arviat, Mr. Alagalak.

Member's Statement 061 – 2(4): Seal Hunting Incident

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today and everyone is aware that it's Friday; it's a light day.

So I would like to make a comment or a statement in regard to this individual who went out hunting all night in the wintertime and he was so tired, so he set up his tent and put the seal beside the door of the tent so the dogs won't eat the seal in the middle of the night.

When he went to bed, the seagulls were making so much noise that he couldn't fall asleep and he got angry. That's when a funny thing occurred. When he got really angry he opened the door and he went to go kill the seagulls. He tripped on the door and he fell right on top of his seal carcasses, so he got really angry and upset but as he lay on top of the seals, he realized the seagulls were flying away.

So therefore I will be asking questions on it because we are not supposed to kill seagulls no matter how frustrated you get. So I just made that statement to make sure you smile to this. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Members' Statements. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Kattuk.

Member's Statement 062 – 2(4): Travelling a Long Distance for Tobacco

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is Friday. In the past there were three men who went to the Nunavik mainland to look for tobacco. As my colleagues say, Inuit, even though they were poor, they were very capable people.

My uncle, my mother's brother who went out on his *Qajaq*, from the island they went to Kuujjuaraapik to look for tobacco. They traveled long distances to search for tobacco. I don't know how many nights and days they traveled by *Qajaq* in the middle of the ocean because the Inuit were very capable and because of that, we're able to stand here today.

Even though they were floating on their *Qajaqs* in the ocean, in the middle of the night they would tie their *Qajaqs* together and set their anchor down so they could go to sleep. The birds would follow along with them and they would float. During the day they would travel some more to Kuujjuaraapik just because they wanted to tobacco so badly.

Although there was a Hudson Bay Company in the Belcher Islands, when they ran out of tobacco at that store or that trading post, they had to travel by *Qajaq* to Kuujjuaraapik

and I'm sure that they bought more things other than tobacco. Because of the urge of tobacco they traveled long distances.

Today one pack of cigarettes costs \$17. For that reason, I don't think they will quit smoking because of that urge they were able to travel long distances by *Qajaq*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Members' Statements. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Premier.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning. We have special guests from overseas that we would like to welcome.

Those individuals who are here for training from the media, from Russia, Louis Tapardjuk, who is my colleague, will meet with them and I would like to welcome them very much.

I'm going to try and pronounce their names, so I apologize ahead of time before if I don't pronounce your name properly. Andrey Privalikhin, welcome. Sergey Gunin, welcome. Mikhail Baklanov, welcome. Petre Tsvetov, welcome. Inna Denisova, welcome. And the representative from the federal government, Olga J. Keenan, welcome.

So I would like to wish them a very good stay here and I would like to wish them the best in their training. I am going to start saying something in Russian. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Welcome to Nunavut, Canada. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome my wife to the Gallery. My wife, she could have become a teacher when we first got together, but she wanted to take care of the family. I am very proud of her and I am very happy because my children are very kind to me because she raised them very nicely. I would like to welcome her to the Gallery.

I would also like to welcome Gwen, our son's daughter, and Nungaq, our eldest son's son. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mrs. Netser, welcome to the gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Ms. Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to acknowledge, first of all I would like to apologize to the individuals visiting to Canada. I was supposed to go for supper with you last night and I am sorry I could not make it. I am glad to see you were welcomed to the gallery.

I would like to recognize our pages. I am always pleased to see our young pages around the chamber. This week it was very good to see what we have seen.

I will make a brief comment in the House. There is a couple in the House by their namesake because naming individuals after another individual is very important in the Inuit way of life. There is...*inaudible*...which is Tagak's father and his wife Aggeak. Those are named after a couple. That is part of our way of life.

When I was growing up, I honestly thought I was partnered up. I thought that individual was my husband even though he was a very old person. When I first got married, that's when I realized that is how you got married. In Inuit language and tradition we have to keep them and learn them and we have to teach our young people about those. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Brown. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. (interpretation ends) Oral Questions. Mr. Barnabas.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 068 – 2(4): Medical Exam Fees to Obtain Driver's Licence

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health and Social Services. When I toured my constituencies, I was told that the individuals taking heavy equipment training need medical exams before they get their licenses. They also have to pay for these exams.

The fee varies. Some cost \$65, some have to pay \$75 while some have to pay \$110. In my riding of Arctic Bay, they pay \$110.

Why is this fee different even though there should be a standard fee? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. (interpretation) Minister responsible for Health and Social Services, Honourable Leona Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is correct. Under the *Canada Health Act*, we charge a fee for uninsured services performed by our staff and this is the practice across Canada. The *Canada Health Act* identifies what we will provide for free and what we will charge for uninsured services.

There are different rates charged for examinations for people that are not ill and require physical examinations to, for example, obtain licenses. The member is correct in that.

I tried to get the fee schedule for today. I don't have that information available but there is a fee schedule that I will provide to the member, along with the other charges across Canada in relation to our current jurisdiction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Your first supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you. I thank the minister for her response.

Mr. Speaker, it seems like the fees should be the same throughout Nunavut because there's a fee for a driver's licence. When they take a medical exam they have to pay a fee and the fee is very different. Can the minister provide the House with information to make sure that this fee is standardized? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Minister Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will ask my staff to do a review of the cost of the physical examinations that are for uninsured services and provide that information to the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Peterson.

Question 069 – 2(4): Elder Abuse Update

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of elder abuse arose at the Kitikmeot Inuit Association Annual General Meeting in October 2006. I questioned the minister last year about what his department is doing to assist vulnerable elders who are being abused. He had indicated that his department does not know how big the problem is.

My question for the minister: can the minister update the House on what specific action his department has done since June 2006 to identify how large the elder abuse issue is in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Minister of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, Honourable Louis Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question.

The responsibility that we have for elders, especially to do with the abuse of elders, we are still doing a study about elders. I think there was legislation, Bill 16, on how to deal with elders because we have some money set aside to protect the elders, such as recreational events that we can provide for them and other things.

What we have is we have some money set aside, if it's agreed to by the legislature, that the *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* Committee had been asked by my department to see how we can help the elders more but to date, this is happening.

Anything to do with elders is what we're doing right now to make it better for elders in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the answer. As I mentioned in my Member's Statement the other day, there are elders who are being mistreated in my riding, I'm sure it's happening in other ridings. To me, Mr. Speaker, if one elder is mistreated, that's elder abuse and that's one elder too many.

My question for the minister: can the minister tell the House what an elder can do, or who they can call if they're abused or mistreated? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Minister Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If an elder is abused or thinks they're being abused, as the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, we don't really have any responsibility over that because we don't have the service people for that.

They can go to Social Services because I know there are elders' groups in each of the communities. Those are the people that the elders can talk to and if they can report them to the community elders' groups. But I know, Mr. Speaker, that the majority of the communities have elders' groups and those elders that are being abused can approach that group in the community because we don't really know what's happening in each community.

I'm sure, as well, that Social Services can assist those elders that are being abused. We have heard that whenever they don't have enough resources for their needs, we have heard about that. Those are the things that I could say at this point.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister Tapardjuk. Your second supplementary, Mr. Peterson.

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

Mr. Speaker, education and public awareness programs are important to raise the visibility of the hidden crime of elder abuse. It's happening because elders are talking about it and it was raised at the Kitikmeot Inuit Association annual general meeting as I mentioned.

However, there doesn't seem to be much promotion about the issue except during the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day held annually across the world. My question for the minister: can the minister tell the House what actual programs her department has in place or is working on to help elders who are being abused or mistreated? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Minister Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We hold a telephone conference every month from the four regions, Baffin South, Baffin North, Kivalliq region, and Kitikmeot region. The staff have a telephone conference to try to find out if there are any elders being abused, or elders that are not being helped, or elders having a problem. That's what the telephone conference consists of and to give them information on getting help and stuff like that.

I would like for that legislation to continue and to succeed in the House so the elders can get more assistance through law. We expect that legislation will come into force so the elders can be looked after properly.

We will continue with our monthly conference calls to the elders' groups in the communities or in the regions. We don't really have anything that we can use to support or help those elders who are being abused at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister Tapardjuk. Your final supplementary, Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that answer. It is encouraging that there is something happening out there to help the elders. I am glad to hear the minister is working on it.

In Ontario, elder abuse is a high visibility issue. They have designated October 19 as Elder Abuse Awareness Day in Ontario to remember the victims of elder abuse. It raises awareness about this hidden crime. I read that in the March 2005 Elders Report.

My question for the minister: can the minister tell the House if she will commit to designate a Nunavut Elder Abuse Awareness Day to help raise awareness of elder abuse in Nunavut to help elders? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Minister Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, at this time we have been involved as Nunavummiut in recognizing a day for elders. We have involved with that elders'

recognition day and we have made posters on that day to give information to the public about elder abuse and what can happen to people who do not treat elders properly.

Those are the things we are going to be doing to recognize a day for elders. Also, as Minister of Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth we have to be able to promote the healthy lifestyle of elders and their youth and for everyone to work together to take care of the elders.

We have to promote a family unit amongst all Inuit within a family. That's what we are doing right now. We will continue to do that to help them, not just to elders but to the extended family for them to have a better life by helping and looking after each other. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Evyagotailak.

Question 070 – 2(4): Long Term Care for Seniors

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

In early December, I wrote a letter to the minister on this issue of an elder who is receiving long term care outside the territory. I spoke in the House a number of times on the need of our elders to be closer to home and family. It is important we give consideration to quality of life issues like hearing our mother tongue, eating our traditional food and receiving visits from our family and friends.

It has been over three months since I asked whether the department would consider placing this elder in Yellowknife so that family and friends passing through could visit him and bring him food and comfort. Can the Minister provide some information on the status of her reply to my letter? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Member. Minister of Health and Social Services, Honourable Leona Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, I had mentioned that many of our citizens, we provide assistance to them through other jurisdictions' support systems because we do not have facilities in Nunavut or the capacity to provide 24/7 care to individuals in need. We just do not have enough space in the Nunavut territory.

In the particular case the member makes reference to, that individual we have been working to try and place the person in Yellowknife as the member indicated. We have to work with the jurisdiction that owns and provides that service in the Northwest Territories.

There is a waiting list of individual residents from the Northwest Territories for that facility and we are part of that waiting list to try and place the person from Kugluktuk

closer to home. The fact is there is no space. We provide that space and individual service where it is available presently.

I mentioned again yesterday we are trying to build more capacity in Nunavut, but we are not there yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Your first supplementary, Mr. Evyagotailak.

Mr. Evyagotailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Madame Minister. The children have a right to learn from their grandparents and also great-grandparents. It is very important for them to visit their grandparents, but it is very hard for the family to visit their grandparents because it is way out of our community, and quite a way to go and visit.

We should really try and work on facilities for the regions. Mr. Speaker, can the minister update this House on what consideration her department is giving to establish an elders' care facility in the Kitikmeot? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are constructing a continuing care facility in the Kitikmeot Region in Gjoa Haven, as per the capital plan approved in November. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Your second supplementary, Mr. Evyagotailak.

Mr. Evyagotailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Madame Minister. Can the minister update me on when this facility will be ready to be used? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Evyagotailak. Minister Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm hoping both facilities in Gjoa Haven and Igloolik will be available for use some time in 2008. I believe the majority of material and so on will be on this summer's sealift. So, some time in 2008. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat, Mr. Alagalak.

Question 071 – 2(4): Seagulls Protected Under the Law

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since today is Friday, I would like to direct a question to the Minister responsible for Environment.

My question is: when we are not too aware of different rules or legislation, then we can go to court. My question to the minister is, the seagulls that are around, because they have lived up here long, are they protected under the law? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Minister responsible for Environment, Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I used to get frustrated with the seagulls too. They are protected under the law because they clean up, they eat garbage, because they are scavengers. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Alagalak.

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What would happen if somebody killed a seagull? If somebody was watching, would they be charged? Would they be fined? Can the minister advise me on if they would be jailed, and for how long? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the information in front of me but whenever somebody breaks the law, they are investigated automatically. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Your second supplementary, Mr. Alagalak.

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For wildlife that is protected by law, there are a lot of young people in Nunavut and a lot of them are not aware of the legislation. I wonder if your department lets the public know what is protected in the communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We talked with the hunter and trapper organizations and the conservation officers about what is protected and what is not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Alagalak.

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems like if somebody kills an animal that is protected then that's the only time they find out they are protected. They are not made aware. I wonder if the minister can provide me with written material on those fines or what the penalties would be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the seagulls, yes I will before the session is over, provide him with information.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Mr. Mapsalak.

Question 072 – 2(4): Update on Changes to Drivers’ Licences

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, we heard that there were going to be changes made to the drivers’ licences. Is the minister aware of when this is going to be? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Honourable David Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes we were one of the signatories in Canada to make changes in September 2005. Last year in March we had to find out who would be responsible for the renewal of the licences. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. He didn’t respond to my question. Do they know or have they identified which month or year they have to be completed by? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Minister Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The information that I have doesn’t indicate the exact date but I will get that information and let the member know. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cameras that are used for those are fairly old and a lot of communities don’t have those cameras ready. When will they renew those cameras to accommodate the required change of their drivers’ licences? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Minister Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. These are currently being worked on how we are going to get the new cameras and how they will be updated. This is currently being worked on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your final supplementary, Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If there are going to have to be changes made, a lot of them will have renewed their driver's licenses. It costs to change them. Once the changes are required, will they be handed out free by the government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Minister Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once we get the dates, as we get the updates and when the renewal time is closer, it will be just the same, we will go by the expiration date on the license. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister Simailak. Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet North, Mr. Curley.

Question 073 – 2(4): Raven Poisoning Update

Mr. Curley (interpretation): In regard to the ravens, I would like to ask the Minister of Environment, they're suspicious that the ravens have been poisoned. Because those ravens don't know how to read, they can't be very selective as to what kind of food they can eat.

I wonder if the minister can report to the House because they have very adequate laboratories. Before they just suspect, I wonder if they could do an examination to make sure it is actual poisoning and let it be known to the House. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Minister of Environment.

Hon. Patterk Netser: A number of dead ravens have been found since January and February. We have sent the birds out for autopsy and we have found out they have been poisoned by Habitrol, which is a pest control for birds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Your first supplementary, Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Minister, it would be good if you could table the information because as the public, we have to know if it is exactly caused by that. In our communities, there are too many ravens and they become a nuisance when you leave food outside. Sometimes our garbage bins don't have covers. They just make a mess in our communities.

It's very expensive if somebody deliberately kills a raven, the fine is way too high. I wonder if the minister can provide the information to the House because if they were fined like that, somebody might commit suicide if they have to pay a fine in such a large amount. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Minister of Environment, Mr. Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) We know now how those ravens died but I can tell my colleague we can check into the fine, \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 ... we can look at this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Netser. Oral Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Kattuk.

Question 074 – 2(4): Different Prices of Tobaccos

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I agree that we should just call them garbage makers, or eyesore makers, because a lot of our windows have droppings from the ravens.

In regard to the tobacco that I said I don't know who would be responsible for tobacco. I think the prices of tobacco in the communities are different. Are they different in the communities, the prices of tobacco in the communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Honourable David Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know if the prices of tobacco are different because it's usually up to the retailers to set the cost. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This has been a concern and I just wanted to get more information. I wonder if they can try to maintain the same price in the communities because I don't think it's a big deterrent for people to stop smoking anyway. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Minister Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is at the discretion of the local retailers. They are owned and operated and the Co-ops are independent. It's up to the retail outlets to set the prices for tobacco. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second supplementary, Mr. Kattuk.

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister get together with the retailers and see if there can be any reduction to the price of tobacco. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Minister Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated earlier, it's at the discretion of the retail outlets. I won't even entertain the idea of having a meeting with those company owners. If somebody thinks that the price of tobacco is too much then they can either quit or...I'm sorry...our clerk thinks that's pretty funny...it's up to the discretion of the retail outlets and they're the ones who set the prices for tobacco and tobacco products. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Kattuk.

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister consider looking at the tobacco tax and consider reduction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Minister Simailak.

Hon. David Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My colleague probably recalls that the price of the tobacco tax was increased. We are anticipating generating revenue of \$2.7 million from the tobacco tax. In 2005-06 we made over \$8 million from the sale of tobacco and we are anticipating another \$2.7 million through the tobacco and tobacco products tax. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for the High Arctic, Mr. Barnabas.

Question 075 – 2(4): Update on Passport Photos

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

We have not rectified the issue of passports, and we are still having problems with taking passport quality photos in the High Arctic Area. The people of Resolute Bay and Grise Fiord have relatives that live outside of Canada, and they have relatives in Greenland, but the problem is they can't go visit their relatives without passports.

We approved Community and Government Services for \$800,000 to be used for photograph equipment which would be made available to the communities, but then again that photograph equipment does not take passport quality pictures.

The minister said to me this year and last year that he would look into the matter and make sure there is equipment available that can take passport quality pictures. But, to date, Mr. Speaker, there have been complaints from my constituents about not being able to get their photos.

At this point, we don't know where to turn to anymore, especially when Canadians are now required to have passports if they want to go to the United States. The smaller communities don't have any avenues left.

They aren't Canadian citizens but they are landed immigrants. Some of my constituents are originally from Greenland but they can't go visit their homeland. I would like to ask the minister to give me an update on what is happening on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, Homelessness, and Immigration, Hon. Ed Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue with the passports, as all the Members of the House know, is a federal issue.

The federal government issues passports. What our government has tried to do is try to facilitate Nunavummiut being able to get quality photos taken that will actually meet the standard that has been requested by Immigration Canada for passports.

What that entails, Mr. Speaker, is that the quality of photos being taken has to meet the standard that has been put in place by the federal government. We have looked at several different sources since our last discussion here in the House.

Right now, we have what is called 'passport in a box' kind of a camera. It is around \$5,000. We're looking at where we will be able to help facilitate this in communities and how we will get money to help train people to be able to use this equipment.

The member is correct: the current equipment we have right now for driver licenses, ID and so on may not be up to the quality that is needed for passports. We have investigated a system to be able to use, we've priced that system out, we've met with our federal partner to say we know there is an issue in Nunavut, would you like to help partner with us and provide the needed resources for Nunavummiut to do this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Your first supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government used a large amount of money when they sent one of my constituents down to Ottawa to have his picture taken so he can get a passport. Maybe it would be a lot simpler if we all just got sent down to Ottawa and get our pictures taken so we can get passports. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sure Nunavummiut would be very pleased to take Mr. Barnabas up on his offer to use his constituency fund and fly to Ottawa. Thank you, on behalf of Nunavummiut, Mr. Barnabas.

He's not being serious. What I am trying to say is that we are looking at right now between \$50,000 to \$100,000 to purchase the needed equipment for all communities in Nunavut. At the same time, I've gone back to the federal government and said, "Look. Is there an opportunity here to help us provide some of the training?" That means bringing a trainer here into Nunavut, and either sending them to each community, or holding regional meetings in Iqaluit, Rankin Inlet, and Cambridge Bay where we bring people in from communities to learn how to use the equipment.

That's some of the discussions that we're having. The federal government has not done this for any other jurisdiction. They do realize that there are some unique issues in Nunavut. We need to be able to have a budget for that. As the members know we're discussing the budget right now. I have to be able to come up with the \$100,000, or whatever monies that we need to be able to purchase the equipment and then I have to look at if there's monies available to train people to have this meeting, to bring people into the communities, let's say bring in people into Rankin Inlet from all the Kivalliq communities for three days for training. Do you house them? And should we be doing that when it's the federal government's responsibility for passports.

So that's some of the issues. So we haven't been just sitting around. We've been working on it. We've priced out things. I've brought the information to Cabinet, for example. We have the assistant deputy minister in Ottawa right now, Mr. Carson, who is working on it. I would hope to be in the position in the next couple of weeks to be able to price this out and see where we go.

Again, we have researched it. We've gone back to the different avenues. Some of the equipment we have in communities right now that's not our concern because it is good for drivers' licenses. The federal government has changed the standard that they have on passport photos because of security reasons, so we're trying to meet those standards.

I would suggest to you in the next couple of weeks we'll be in a position where we will actually have the equipment and so on. What we need to be able to do is see how logistically we provide training for that equipment and what happens. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Your second supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Spring is coming around again and a lot of people want to visit their relatives outside of Canada. Spring and summer is usually the time to take holidays and a lot of people want to go outside of the country. I'm talking about individuals who want to get their passports right away.

What is the government going to do to accommodate those individuals at this time; the ones who require immediate passports? They are talking about traveling in the springtime. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Very quickly, if a person knows if they are going to be traveling in April or May they should be applying for their passport, if they don't have it, in October, or November, and December. It takes anywhere between, according to the federal government, again because that's where apply to get your passport, it could take anywhere between eight to 12 weeks.

We know for example, because of the new regulations that have been brought in by the United States Government that no citizen of Canada can fly to the United States by air unless they have a passport to get back and forth. However, the American Government has been flexible. In the last several weeks, since they've put this in place in January, they have allowed Canadians to go across the border without passports, as long as they have two pieces of identification. That's not going to continue for much longer. That's the information that we have.

What I can say to the member is, we understand there is a problem with getting passport photos in Nunavut. Passports are issued by the federal government. We are trying to help Nunavummiut be able to access those photos and we are looking at which system we need to be able to do that with.

Do we hire a photographer, do we send them around, and so on. So there is a lot of work that needs to be done. Should the Government of Nunavut pick up the expenses for an area of jurisdiction that is a federal concern?

I have written the ministers' responsible on several occasions. We have had discussions at the intergovernmental affairs level. We are pushing it. At the end of the day, we will have to look at it, in the next couple of weeks, if the Government of Nunavut proceeds, buys their own equipment, and does a one-shot deal to get people their passport quality pictures that are needed.

That is where we are with that right now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Canadian citizens, we don't have any access to those types of services. In regard to the applications, of course they are in English and French but we are talking about unilingual people when we are talking about the people in my riding, especially those people who are landed immigrants originally from Greenland and Qaanaaq.

Is it possible for your department to translate the application forms so that they will know what documents are required by the federal government, especially for those people who do not read either English or French? Is it possible to translate those documents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every time in Nunavut that we deal with federal forms, they are in either English or French because those are recognized as the official languages of Canada. It is the same problem we have with Income Tax.

We have moved several times, and I have written the Canadian Revenue and Taxation Agency, for example, and asked them to translate forms into Inuktitut. They haven't been able to do that. They are not able to do that with the passport applications either.

However, locally at the Human Resources and Social Development Canada office here in Iqaluit, they have informed us that they have bilingual staff available and they can walk through the forms, if needed, with people who apply. At the same time, here in Nunavut we need our federal partner to come to the table in many different areas with services that we are trying to deliver and the member has raised one very important one right now with passport applications and the application process.

What I can suggest to the member is that the federal government is responsible for passports. If there is a need to have them translated in a given community, or help, then that person can use the 800 number for here in Iqaluit. If they are not getting that satisfaction on the passport issue, to let our office know so we can contact our Member of Parliament, at the same time, the federal government.

On the passport issue and the photos, specifically, I would hope to be in a position again within the next few weeks, to be able to make an announcement on how we are going to proceed because we are in discussions with our federal partner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Peterson.

Question 076 – 2(4): Services for the Elders and the Disabled

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Earlier in this session, I raised the issue of elder care in Nunavut. I raised concern about a couple of elders in Cambridge Bay that need care.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services to clarify for this House what specific resources and services are provided to elders and individuals with disabilities at the local level in our communities? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Minister of Health and Social Services, the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Currently, the Department of Health will develop community based, individual based plan of care programs and each community has a home and community care worker and a nurse.

In the case of Cambridge Bay I believe there are about 25 clients that the Department of Health provides a service to through the home care workers as well as the nurse to provide assistance to individuals that have disabilities or are ill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Your first supplementary, Mr. Peterson.

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

I mentioned the other day that, to quote the government, there are approximately 1,000 elders in Nunavut. I'm sure this information will also be able to help staff at the community level.

The minister mentioned there are 25 elders in Cambridge Bay with disabilities. I think it is probably a few more than that. I would like to ask the minister: what does the Department of Health and Social Services do to ensure that every elder in each community is receiving the care and support that they need? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Minister Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Home care services and programs are developed by doing a clinical assessment of the individual elder's needs, and based on that, the home care worker as well as the home care nurse will develop a program in identifying what kind of need or service this individual will require.

In terms of what we do, we have in most health centres a day set aside to deal with elders who need regular check-ups and so on, similar to Well Women, and so on, but for elders. In Cambridge Bay, I also believe there is a program available through the health centre, set aside for elders for the entire community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Your second supplementary, Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for her answer. Mr. Speaker, we also have many individuals in Nunavut with disabilities and we have several in Cambridge Bay that I'm aware of.

My question for the minister: can the minister clarify whether her department keeps a record of the number of individuals with disabilities in each community, type or severity of disability, and the level of support and assistance each individual receives or should receive? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Minister Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Department of Health does also provide services to individuals who require 24/7 care of people with disabilities. The individuals that require the 24/7 care are placed in facilities such as the one in Chesterfield Inlet, the one in Rankin Inlet, one here, and in other cases, we provide care for people with disabilities in long term care facilities outside the Nunavut Territory because just do not have the capacity to provide all those services here in Nunavut.

For those individuals, yes we do have those numbers and type of care they need based on, again, a clinical assessment of that individual person's disability. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Peterson.

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

One of the commitments that we all supported as Members of the Legislative Assembly during our Arviat full caucus retreat in September 2004 was to open one continuing care facility for each year of the term of this assembly.

We're going into our fourth year. To date, only two such facilities have been announced. My question for the minister: when will the location of the other two facilities be determined and announced. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Minister Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The two facilities that we are going ahead with were announced. The other two, we have not made an announcement strictly because we are limited to our financial resources. I think this was also raised yesterday by the member from Arviat.

I am working with all my colleagues within the fiscal framework that we're challenged with in trying to meet some of those priorities identified through the retreat in Arviat. But, the financial limitations that we're under prevent us from moving forward with the two new additional facilities for Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Member for Akulliq, Mr. Mapsalak.

Question 077 – 2(4): Number of Communities with Passport Equipment

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since I have been a Member of the Legislative Assembly this is the very first time that I have asked this question. I will ask the second question.

My colleague, in regard to Mr. Barnabas' question, I would like to ask the same question along those lines to Mr. Picco. I applied for a passport and I just gave up and I didn't even receive my passport.

Could the minister tell us how many communities in Nunavut have passport cameras?
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Minister responsible for Multiculturalism, Homelessness and Immigration, Honourable Ed Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that the equipment that we have right now in our communities, for example for drivers' licences and for GID, which is the General Identification photo ID, is not the quality that is needed for passport applications in Ottawa.

What that means Mr. Speaker, is that those pictures that we take with those cameras cannot meet the standard that is needed to be on a passport. Here in Iqaluit there is actually a professional photographer who is able to take passport quality pictures and I believe there may be someone else who is available in Rankin from time to time.

What this means Mr. Speaker, is the equipment that we need to be able to take quality photographs that will meet the standard in our communities, the equipment that we have right now needs to be upgraded. We are looking at a process between Passport Canada, Immigration Canada, Community and Government Services as well as through the Immigration Secretariat to see how we can achieve that.

Again, as I said earlier we would hope to be in a position in the next couple of weeks to be able to make an announcement on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Your first supplementary, Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Do I understand correctly that there is no equipment good enough to take passport quality photos? Is that the only place where you can get passport quality pictures? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the member is correct in that the equipment is there and what has occurred is that the pictures that have been taken with that equipment that we have right now in place, some of them have been rejected, I think about 60 percent were rejected.

So what we need to be able to do is upgrade that equipment so that we have the quality for the communities. Any person from Nunavut, who is travelling for example to Iqaluit or to Rankin, should try to have their passport photos taken. If they have the opportunity,

any of our people from Nunavut who are going to Winnipeg or Edmonton or Yellowknife or Ottawa, and have an opportunity to get a passport photo should take advantage of that.

At the same time Mr. Speaker, what we are trying to do is provide that equipment here in Nunavut in all the communities and we are looking at trying to do that... 'passport in a box' is the program camera. I think we will be able to do that.

Also Mr. Speaker, I would say to the members, do not give up. When he applied for his passport he said that he has given up on trying. If the member needs some assistance with that passport he can contact our office here and we've been very successful in facilitating passports along with our MP in Ottawa for literally hundreds of Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. The Question Period is now over. (interpretation ends) Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Petitions. Item 11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Item 12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills. Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Minister Simailak.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 044 – 2(4): Nunavut Small Craft Harbours Report – Revised 2006

Hon. David Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the following document, the Nunavut Small Harbours Report, Revised 2006. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Please bring the tabled document to the table officers. Item 14. Notices of Motions. Item 15. Notices of Motions for the First Reading of Bills. Item 16. Motions. Item 17. First Reading of Bills. Minister Netser.

Item 17: First Reading of Bills

Bill 04 – Workers' Compensation Act – First Reading

Hon. Patterk Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Nattilik, that Bill 4, *Workers' Compensation Act*, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Question has been called. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried. Bill 4 has had its first reading.

First Reading of Bills. Item 18. Second Reading of Bills. Minister Brown.

Item 18: Second Reading of Bills

Bill 05 – An Act to Amend the Local Authorities Elections Act – Second Reading

Hon. Levinia Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Baffin South, that Bill 5, *An Act to Amend the Local Authorities Elections Act*, be read for the second time.

This bill amends the Local Authorities Elections Act to facilitate the better administration of municipal elections in Nunavut; clarify requirements; and correct references to the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. Question has been called. All those in favour, raise your hand. Opposed. The motion is carried. Bill 5 has had second reading, and accordingly, it is referred to the appropriate standing committee.

Second Reading of Bills. Minister Simailak.

Bill 08 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act – Second Reading

Hon. David Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Iqaluit West, that Bill 8, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*, be read for the second time.

This bill amends the *Income Tax Act* to increase the cost of living deductions for single parents. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Thank you, Minister. Question has been called. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried, and Bill 8 has had second reading and accordingly it is referred to the appropriate standing committee.

Second Reading of Bills. Item 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 1, 2, and 3 with Mr. Barnabas in the Chair.

I ask that members remain in their seats and proceed directly to Committee of the Whole and take your 60-minute lunch break at noon.

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

Chairman (Mr. Barnabas): I would like to call this committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bill 1, Bill 2, and Bill 3. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Evygotailak.

Mr. Evygotailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to continue with Bill 1 and the review of the main estimates for the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, followed by the Department of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Evyagotailak. Do we agree to continue with the main estimates for the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 01 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2007-08 – Consideration in Committee – Culture, Language, Elders & Youth

Chairman (interpretation): Mr. Minister, would you like to go to the witness table with your officials?

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, they are coming right away. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Sergeant-At-Arms, please assist the minister and his officials to the witness table. Thank you, Mr. Sergeant-At-Arms. Welcome Mr. Minister, and your officials. Mr. Minister, please introduce your officials for the record. Thank you.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my left is David Akeegok, my Deputy Minister.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. At this time, we can continue with the main estimates on page F-9, Culture and Heritage. Mr. Curley, you had the floor yesterday. We are on pages F-9, F-10, and F-11. Those pages are together.

Just before I recognize the floor, I would like the minister to introduce his other official on his right.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is David Kolot, Director of Finance.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. We're on page F-9, F-10, and F-11. (interpretation ends) Culture and Heritage. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$3,814,000. Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the minister and his officials to the House today. I have a question on one of your objectives is the development and delivery of archaeology. Can you provide us with an overview of the functions that your archaeology division provides in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will get my deputy minister to respond to the question.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Akeegok.

Mr. Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What we do is deal with different things. Inuit Heritage Trust works with our department. What we do is we train people to do archaeological work. We also find archaeological sites; some of them have to be dug out.

(interpretation ends) The other part is; any kind of development that takes place in Nunavut, if they're involved in archaeological sites, those are the kind of things that we do have to notify.

There are promotional posters and public service announcements that are out there and our key message is to try and educate everybody about the importance of archaeological sites and the need to preserve those by not disturbing.

So there are various functions that we do in the Archaeological Program. Within that, a lot of our work is working very closely with the Inuit Heritage Trust on all aspects of archaeology. That's called for under *Article 33* of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Akeegok. Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister and the deputy minister for that answer. Mr. Chairman, can the minister clarify for me here, they talk about archaeology but in their department do they also have a role to play in protection of palaeontological sites? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): I will get my deputy to respond.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Akeegok.

Mr. Akeegok: Yes, we do administer the federal Act that covers archaeology and palaeontology. Those are the two that we are in charge of administering for the Nunavut territory. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Akeegok. Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister and Deputy Minister for that answer. Could the minister tell me how many archaeologists work in your archaeology division? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): We have one person in our department at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that answer. Nunavut is quite a large area. I am sure there are many archaeological sites and paleontological sites across Nunavut. I think there is over 2 million square kilometres in Nunavut.

Do you feel that one archaeologist is a large enough staff to administer all the work that the person would be required to administer? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Minister.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, I will get my deputy to answer the question.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Akeegok.

Mr. Akeegok: We do have one position under our department but if there is archaeological work, there are different organizations that could apply to do some archaeological digs. The most common ones would be the national parks, or other mining development.

Before any development is done, during screening the company is obligated to ensure that there is work being done. It is done by our department but is contracted to be done by a university or a person with archaeological degrees. There is work being done outside of the department but our department, in this particular case, is focusing on the department's requirements and try to determine how many are being conducted in any given year.

We also try and do some field work so we can attract some of our youth to the programs. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Akeegok. Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister and Deputy Minister for that answer. Can the minister tell me if his department has a map or maps of Nunavut and the communities that clearly identify on those maps all the known archaeological sites and all the known paleontological sites? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, we do have maps. We also have a database. Anybody can access them. Thank you.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I thank the Minister for that answer. The minister said that anyone can access them. Could he clarify how they can access them? Do they have to apply to the archaeological department or are they available online? Can they obtain them from the hamlet offices in the different communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, they are available if you ask the culture and heritage branch. If you request one, you can obtain one. They are not available on the website though. You can request them if you require more information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that answer. Although I am not on the Standing Committee Ajauqtiit, I am aware there is a legislative proposal in the system called *An Act to Amend the Historical Resources Act*.

One of the identified principle intents of the legislation or amendments in this particular legislative proposal is to identify and address any potential conflicts with other statutes regulating historical resources. An example cited is the Nunavut archaeological and palaeontological sites regulations.

I wonder if the minister could tell me if he knows of any or has identified any potential conflicts in Nunavut with respect to that particular federal regulation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): We have legislation that we are proposing but it's not ready yet. I will make it available once it's completed. Thank you.

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

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

Mr. Chairman, I have a copy of a Nunavut archaeological and palaeontological sites regulations. They were passed in June 2001. I am aware of a potential issue here for Nunavut, and it concerns fossils.

The definition of a fossil according to this regulation is a preserved shell of an exoskeleton of invertebrates' and eggs' teeth and bones of vertebrates. Mr. Chairman, bones of vertebrates probably includes whale bones.

I know there is a carving industry in Nunavut where a number of carving artists carve in whale bone and have been doing that for many, many decades, 50 or 60 years that I'm aware of, and continue to this day.

There is potential for people who carve in whale bone to be in violation of this federal government act; they could be charged. And, there may be people already charged for all I know. It's a law that was passed federally that affects a small group of people in Nunavut who depend on their livelihood, carving in particular whale bone.

And, most whale bone in Nunavut is older than 50 years, and that is identified as an archaeological artefact if it is 50 years old, so I'm sure fossil is much older.

I wonder if the minister could tell me if he is aware that this is an issue for carving artists in Nunavut; particularly whale bone carving artists? Has he heard of any situations where those folks are in conflict with the regulators, I don't know how many of them there are; it could be 10, 20, or 50.

There are probably a number of them in every region in Nunavut where whale bone is available. I wonder if he could comment if he's heard of any issues from the whale bone artists or if he thinks that act could potentially harm their activities, and their livelihoods. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, the member is correct. The archaeological sites have to be protected and there is a lot of palaeontology in those sites. The Inuit Heritage Trust up to now, we are trying to pass the information out to the public that you cannot go to the archaeological site without a permit.

You need a permit, or a license in order to access archaeological sites. This past fall we received a letter from Pond Inlet where they were concerned that there were people who were collecting bones from the archaeological site and we had this investigated. We are dealing with it because there was a concern from the community.

At this time we cannot say too much whether there will be because they might have to go to court, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that information. I don't know who the individuals are that you're referring to but I am sure they weren't intentional, if they are whalebone artists, carvers and maybe have had access to whalebone for years in that area. I am sure that elsewhere in Nunavut there are also individuals who carve the whalebone and need a supply, I wouldn't know that.

It seems to me that you have these regulations that were passed in 2001. I don't know if they addressed the well-known fact that there are individuals in Nunavut who have been carving for 50 or 60 years in whalebone and that they depend on the whalebone for their livelihood.

I know Canada is well respected around the world. You can see many whalebone carvings in all kinds of embassies, and important buildings around the world. You open up a magazine and you will see pictures of the whalebone carvings. I am sure the whalebone artists in Nunavut are not going to the archaeological sites to loot them. They have gone there to acquire a source of whalebone to create an industry to support their livelihood. I hope that when you are reviewing the legislative process that you identify and recognize that you take into consideration the impact of that industry and the impact of these regulations on the industry, and seek their input in your draft proposal and then find a way to exclude them from the intent of these paleontological sites regulations.

As you said that you could end up in court. You could get upwards of a \$5,000 to \$10,000 fine and/or a year or two in jail for what was probably was just an oversight or ignorance of the law. I know that there is an expression that says ignorance of the law is no excuse but in this day and age there are so many laws and regulations that even as legislators we can't keep on top of them.

That's a comment, Mr. Chairman. I urge the minister and his officials and the archaeologists to recognize and respect the whalebone artists in Nunavut that they're not looters. They're probably trying to get a source of whalebone for their carving for their livelihood. There may be other individuals in Nunavut who are out there to loot and wreck paleontological sites, I am sure you will know who they are too when you get those complaints.

So that will end my comment, there. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Minister, if you wish to respond.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, we will be working with the archaeologists and the Inuit Heritage Trust. We will review that and the proposed legislation, when it's being reviewed, we will work on this. I can say we will be taking photographs of the known archaeological sites that have to be preserved according to the federal legislation and we will try and make it public so that the public will be more aware.

We've been told that some people just go to the archaeological sites but we haven't really made charges, especially if they're Inuit because what we would rather do right now is to give the information out there to the public so they will know that legally they're not supposed to go into archaeological sites.

So we will be able to produce such legislation where we will keep those in mind. What my colleague mentioned, they're very good comments and we'll certainly give them

consideration. We will work with Inuit Heritage Trust and I'm sure we will be able to come up with a conclusion. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. We're on Culture and Heritage, on page F-9, F-10, and F-11. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just for information, even last year there was a tsunami between Baffin Island and Greenland, or if there's an earthquake we encounter a lot of big waves.

Some bones that are not along the shore were getting covered with the sand with the big waves; they're going to have to be collected because we don't want to lose them because they're humongous pieces of head or bones. If they can be provided with funding through HTO, my question is; it was not a resident of Pond Inlet who collected the bones and once I got the information, because he was sending a lot of boxes of whale bones, are they in your hands or in the hands of the RCMP during this process of investigation? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. (interpretation ends) Mr. Minister.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not aware of the people who have been taking out the artefacts and I don't know whether they are being kept by these individuals or not.

The RCMP have been looking into this issue and because they were protected, especially for that incident, we let it go. The RCMP were informed and they were doing an investigation at that time but I can't tell you exactly where those artefacts are. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): In regard to the artefacts that have been taken in the past, I am not overly concerned about that because they are already very likely sold already. But this summer, this individual was taking artefacts and old bones. Were they confiscated?

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Mr. Minister.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will make sure that we get our staff to look into this issue and give us an update about the artefacts and bones that were taken out this summer.

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

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the minister about the permits that are obtained by archaeologists and other people who would like to do archaeological work. Are those permits or licenses obtained from your department or

do you have to go through the Nunavut Heritage Trust or some other organization? Who issues licenses or permits for what?

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, in the summertime there is usually a lot of archaeological work happening in Nunavut. For those people who want to do some research or do archaeological work, they have to get permits or licenses obtained by Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth.

Then again, before they come to our department they have to go through the Inuit Heritage Trust. That is following the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Under the agreement, they have to go through the Heritage Trust. Then those applications are given to our department. We are the ones who issue the permits or licenses.

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

Mr. Curley (interpretation): We are talking about the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth when we are talking about *Iliqqusilirijikkut*. Is it possible for the minister to table a specimen of a permit or license because I don't know what kind of conditions are appended to those permits or licenses?

Yes, I like the idea of having a requirement for a permit or a license. Does this go through the regulation process? If you want to get a permit, what conditions or regulations are there? Thank you, Mr. Chairman?

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, those application forms are available by website and I will commit to tabling a copy of those application forms during this sitting.

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

Mr. Curley (interpretation): In regard to the artefacts, I guess it is part of being part of our culture. But there is one issue I have been concerned about. For example, we look at the showpiece in the centre of the House. If they are old pieces, they have to be preserved or protected.

They are part of our heritage. There are even people out there who don't have a license but are doing some work up here. In regard to the intellectual properties of the Inuit, is it possible to also protect those? For example, if we talk to Mr. Patterk Netser's mother, she knows a lot about midwifery and how it was practiced a long time ago. I believe we have to also protect the intellectual properties of the Inuit.

Then there are the scientists coming who consult with the elders and are deriving all that information for their own purposes. At times, the scientists go back down south. We

might call ourselves Inuit but they end up calling us Eskimo. I don't think that is right. We call ourselves Inuit. I think that is the definition that should be used.

Is it possible to protect the Inuit intellectual property rights? Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, we have discussed this. We have discussed the issue of intellectual property rights. For example, the Inuit traditional knowledge. Yesterday I stated we are taping but are a bit leery about putting them on to the website because anybody out there can take that information and steal it and say that it is their own.

We have looked at the issue of intellectual property rights, in coordination with the Department of Justice, especially the Inuksuk symbol because it is being used everywhere. How can we protect the intellectual Inuit properties?

We did discuss this earlier on, but I am not sure how we can proceed with it. We will definitely have to put it on the table again.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Thank you very much for your indulgence. At this time, our lunch is ready. We will return to Mr. Curley when we return at 1 pm. At this time, we will take a lunch break.

>>Committee recessed at 12:13 and resumed at 13:00

Chairman: Welcome back to the committee, committee members. (interpretation) Mr. Minister, and your staff, welcome back to the Chambers.

We are dealing with Culture, Language, Elders and Youth's main estimates and we are under Culture and Heritage. If you're going to be making any comments please them as brief as possible and to the point, so that we can have a smooth meeting.

At this time Mr. Curley had the floor. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to urge you to make sure that everything goes ahead, especially to set up a policy for intellectual property rights. I think the policy will have to have everything in it, and I am sure that it is just under the guidelines of the legislation.

If there is a procedure set in place I think very strongly that the Inuit should be involved if they're going to be looking at any of the heritage sites around their communities.

I look forward to having the intellectual property rights discussed and also to make sure that you consult with the communities. A lot of people come up here, and it's not just the anthropologists anymore; there's students coming up here who are writing up their theses

and they also interview the Inuit. There was one student who was going on the radio but we couldn't quite understand it. They were saying that they would pay \$20 to interview an elder.

Even if they interview you for two or three hours; they'd still pay you \$20. They were the ones who wanted to interview the elders. They didn't have a license to compile that information, and since we are a very small population we have to make sure that there is a procedure in place. Possibly we can entertain setting up a committee at the community level.

My question is: is it possible for the minister to look into this issue and give an update to the House when possible. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Minister.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, we will look into the issue of intellectual property rights and also taping. The Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth also does interviewing and taping in regard to traditional knowledge. We transcribe all the taped information into written form. After that we could look into the intellectual property portion of it.

We will definitely have to talk about how we can copyright the information. For example, these were derived from an elder, and the elder will have to give his or her permission before any of her interviews can be documented, or copied. I will definitely do as you said and give an update to the House as to what the next steps are going to be.

In regard to archaeology, or even if you are going to do some research around here, they first of all have to get a permit from the Nunavut Research Institute and have to consult with the local government or hamlet council.

It is their discretion whether they will approve or reject that request. The Inuit Heritage Trust also has to be informed. Should anybody have a concern, we have the final say as to whether it should be approved or not.

We have to do something concrete because there are going to be more and more people out there who will be requesting that information. We have to ensure that it is protected. I commit to getting that information out there.

Chairman (interpretation): We are on the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. Culture and Heritage. Page F-9, 10, 11. \$3,814,000. Does the committee agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. (interpretation) Let's move on to page F-12 for Community Programs. Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. Branch Summary. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$2,586,000. Does the committee agree? Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under Community Programs, I believe this program is quite popular in the Keewatin region. When they have culture camps in the communities, the elders usually support the culture camps.

I would like to thank the minister for providing support to the elders. As you have stated there's a cooperation agreement in regard to funding. From what I have seen in the Keewatin region, the young people and the elders are usually very pleased to meet with each other.

When the youth meet with the elders, with their help, they enjoy the day with the elderly women. I wanted to name those individuals now: Norman Atagalak; the father of the Minister of Finance. They are always pleased, Joe Qaunaq and David Nulu, when they are doing the culture camps, although they always have limited resources.

I do know that this program really supports the elders and the youth. It brought back the interest of the young people, things like preparing and skinning seal skins, so this was very helpful. I would like to see this funding line item increased.

I just wanted to find that out. Perhaps sometime in the future you can table some kind of report in regard to that because in the Baffin region, I'm sure they have those kinds of activities. I would like to hear more about that. Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The expenditure statements were tabled. When we are going to provide contributions, we want to receive reports, too.

I will work with my officials and perhaps come up with a little report to enhance or get interest going from the public and to make a report as to what activities they have held. At this time, I cannot commit to you whether we are going to produce a report but I will discuss this issue with my officials. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. We're on Community Programs for Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. Branch Summary. Page F-12, F-13, and F-14.

(interpretation ends) Total Operations and Maintenance. \$2,586,000. Does the committee agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. We'll go to page F-15. Sport Nunavut. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We were very proud during the Canada Winter Games, and we were shown the uniforms yesterday. We are so proud to

see the Inuit of Nunavut winning games. Even though they were not Inuit games, they had won.

In the past, we heard that Inuit were very fast runners and very strong people. Although I asked a question to an elder, if Inuit took part in the Olympics in those days I'm sure they would have won. But, I was told no, and I asked why? Because Inuit are very shy and timid, but it's okay now.

They would not have taken part in the Olympics. But, my question is: how many medals did Nunavummiut win in Whitehorse? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Mr. Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): I thought I had the figure, but I was asked to send the information to all the members via e-mail. We have all the information on the computer as to how many gold, silver and bronze medals were won.

You can find the information on the Canada Winter Games in Whitehorse on the Culture, Language, Elders and Youth website. I have asked my officials to send this to the members, and here I thought they were already sent out to the members. I don't even have a copy with me Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. Branch Summary. Main Estimates. Sport Nunavut. Page F-15 and F-16. \$3,843,000. Does the committee agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman (interpretation): We'll go back to page F-4. Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. Department Summary. Detail of Expenditures. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$16,219,000. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just on the business plans on page F-18, at the bottom, under grants and contributions. It states that headquarters, Baffin, Kivalliq, and the Kitikmeot, \$4,360,000, how come there is a big discrepancy between the way they allocate the funding of grants and contributions.

Why is it \$4 million in headquarters, and Kitikmeot; \$155,000, and in the Baffin; \$731,000, Keewatin is something else. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Mr. Minister.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): I will have our Finance Comptroller respond.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Kolot.

Mr. Kolot: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The grants and contributions for headquarters of \$4.3 million are basically grants and contributions for all of Nunavut. So the grants are administered out of the headquarters but this is Nunavut-wide; it's for all people within Nunavut. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kolot. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk: Do you have regional offices for Culture, Language, Elders and Youth? I didn't know you had regional offices for Qikiqtaaluk; \$731,000, given to regional offices to be distributed throughout that region? Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Mr. Kolot.

Mr. Kolot: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do have offices in Baker Lake, and in Igloolik. In the Kivalliq the grants and contributions that are listed there basically pertain to community library operations in the Kivalliq. That's what that contribution is for, because it's specific to libraries within the Kivalliq region that's why it's listed there.

Any grants and contributions that are specific to regions are listed, but if it's for all of Nunavut, all of Nunavummiut to apply, it is in the headquarters budget. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kolot. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So those specific ones that are listed in the regions are in fact continuing. If they are continuing on an annual basis how can we tell if it's an increment on an annual basis? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Mr. Kolot.

Mr. Kolot: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As all members of this Assembly know that 2007-08 estimates represents the status quo. There have been no increases reflected in any grants and contribution categories. It is our intention to proceed with supplementary requests later this year, but for this budget, it simply represents the status quo, as directed by the Financial Management Board. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kolot. Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to get a clarification of the amounts that my colleague was asking about, the grants and contributions that are administered out of the headquarters. Would those have been included in the document that was tabled yesterday in the House that shows all of the grants and contributions for the department? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk: I will get David Kolot to respond to that.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Tapardjuk. Mr. Kolot.

Mr. Kolot: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kolot. Mr. Tootoo. Thank you. Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. Department Summary. Detail of Expenditure. Total Operations and Maintenance. \$16,219,000. Does this committee agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Are you agreed that the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth is concluded?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister, do you have closing remarks?

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes. The money that we have for our department has not increased but what we want to do is still a little bit more. I would like to thank the Members of the Legislature for agreeing to the budget for our department. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. I thank your staff.

I would now like to ask Minister Aglukkaq of Health and Social Services to make her opening remarks.

**Bill 01 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2007-08 – Consideration
in Committee – Health and Social Services**

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for this opportunity to present the 2007-08 Main Estimates and Business Plan for the Department of Health and Social Services to the Committee of the Whole.

We have made some difficult choices in the 2007-08 Operations and Maintenance budget for the department. We had to balance the financial limitations faced by the government as a whole with the real health and social service needs of Nunavummiut.

Mr. Chairman, our goal for 2007-08 is to deliver effective, quality programs and services that meet national standards. Nunavummiut need and deserve a basic, reliable health and social services system that not only responds to illness but supports wellness and provides health protection.

We can achieve this only if we strengthen our financial management capacity so that we can make effective, efficient and responsible use of public funds. Over the coming months we will be transferring the payment processing functions to the Department of Finance. Our Finance Division will then be in a position to focus on budget development, financial projections, and training of the program managers.

We will also strengthen our health protection capacities through the development of a Public Health Strategy for Nunavut. Through research, consultation and workshops, we will create a practical plan for addressing the unique circumstances of Nunavummiut.

In undertaking its day-to-day work, the department will take into consideration the work done before not just by our own staff but also by others such as the Health Integration Initiative involving Nunavut Tunngavik, Health Canada, and the Government of Nunavut.

We will support the efforts of other government departments in implementing community based measures for preventing violence against women. With our small and dispersed populations, it's not possible or reasonable to offer Nunavummiut the full spectrum of health and social services that people in big cities take for granted.

We will be hard-pressed in 2007-08 to follow through with our plans to modestly expand patient and other services in the regional centres.

We are fortunate to have good partnerships with out-of-territory agencies and institutions. We will nurture these relationships over the coming year so that Nunavummiut can continue to access those services that we are unable to offer here.

We can and will continue to deliver primary healthcare services such as homecare, health protection, and environmental health. Thanks to the amended *Pharmacy Act*, our Nurse Practitioners will be able to practice to their full scope.

We are using technology to help us avoid costs and improve the patient's experience. For example, the fetal fibronectin test can confirm if labour is truly under way. This test alone meant 45 medevacs were avoided, and 45 families did not have their lives disrupted unnecessarily.

We also use telehealth and visiting specialists to make best use of our limited financial and human resources. There will be times where our healthcare providers must do what the patient needs rather than what the patient or his family wants simply because the system can't afford to do otherwise.

That is a reality of healthcare today not just in Nunavut, but across Canada. The Department of Health and Social Services recognizes that we need to improve our recruitment and retention of staff especially nurses and physicians.

It is in everyone's best interest to have a stable and qualified workforce for both social and health services. We now offer a wide range of training opportunities to our nursing staff. We will also be making improvements to the physician package.

Over the next three years we hope to employ a greater number of Nunavut graduates of post-secondary programs in health and social service professions. Over the long haul, having a home-grown northern workforce is the best way to stabilize our system of care.

My department is already making contact with potential graduates with a view toward making job offers to those who want a career with the Government of Nunavut. Mr. Chairman, for fiscal year 2007-08, the Department of Health and Social Services is seeking a total of \$225,622,000 for operations and maintenance expenditures.

This is a slight decrease from the 2006-07 revised estimates.

Mr. Chairman, Thank you for the opportunity to make these opening remarks to the Committee of the Whole. I welcome any questions you may have with respect to the 2007-08 main estimates for operations and maintenance for the Department of Health and Social Services. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Madame Minister. Does the Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Health and Social Services have comments? Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do.

Members of the Standing Committee on Health and Education have reviewed the main estimates and business plan of the Department of Health and Social Services for the 2007-08 fiscal year and I am pleased to provide you with opening comments.

The standing committee notes that the operations and maintenance budget for Health and Social Services for the 2007-08 fiscal year is \$225,622,000, which is very close to the amount allocated in 2006-07. Given the department's past history of over-expenditures, the committee urges the minister to ensure that her department keeps close control over its spending in the upcoming year in order to remain within budget.

Mr. Chairman, over a year ago, the Baffin Regional Hospital lost its accreditation status. Although the Department of Health and Social Services was originally given 18 months to meet the set standards for regaining its accreditation, the committee has now been given to understand that the department is working with the Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation to develop new accreditation standards for Nunavut. Members hope that this process will not delay the department's progress in ensuring that services at the Baffin Regional Hospital and all other regional health facilities meet national standards of service and care.

The department is proposing another increase in departmental positions for 2007-08, although it appears that hiring for a number of jobs has been put on hold. At the same

time, the Government of Nunavut's own employment statistics show that as of September 30, 2006, the department was only able to fill 67 percent of its positions, down from 73 percent a year before and down from 80 percent two years before.

One job that has not yet been filled is the position of the Client Services Coordinator. This position was created nearly two years ago in response to the members' request for an individual to be able to assist Members of the Legislative Assembly and their constituents in addressing complaints about service delivered by the department or its contracted service providers.

Last year, Members of this House approved the department's 2006-07 business plan, which clearly committed to filling this position. To date, the position has not been advertised.

Although it receives less emphasis in this year's business plan compared to previous years, the standing committee looks forward to reviewing initiatives resulting from the department's recent *Care Closer to Home Strategy*. The committee consistently supported the department's long-term objective to train and hire more Nunavummiut to work in the health care field.

However, members are disappointed that the number of beneficiaries filling positions at our regional and community facilities is not increasing. The standing committee encourages the minister in her efforts to provide training, certification, and employment opportunities for more Nunavummiut to enter the health care field.

The nursing shortage, in particular, continues to be a major concern across Nunavut as it is in the rest of Canada. The committee urges the minister to continue to work with her officials to ensure that there are full-time nursing staff in all of Nunavut's communities.

It has become apparent that focusing efforts and limited resources on recruiting international nurses has not been as successful as anticipated. The standing committee believes that more effort and resources should be directed to employing full-time Canadian nurses.

The standing committee recommends that the minister work with her counterpart in Education to provide better financial support to Nunavummiut who are training to become nursing professionals. It is vital that these individuals are able to focus on their studies without undue financial stress and that they are assured of a place within Nunavut's health care system as soon as they successfully complete their program.

If extra support can be provided for internationally recruited nurses to pass their Canadian nursing exams while being employed by the department, the standing committee believes that we can do the same for our very own Nunavut-trained nurses.

A Member: Hear, hear

The standing committee is pleased with the progress towards opening 24-hour continuing care facilities in Nunavut. This was a commitment that all members agreed to at our Arviat full caucus retreat. While members have noted that the department's business plan states that local training programs are underway for staffing at the Gjoa Haven Continuing Care Facility, it is not clear whether similar training programs are planned for the upcoming continuing care facility in Igloolik.

The department's business plan focuses on the role to be played by the community-based health committees of Council. Members agree that community-based health committees are in a prime position to provide appropriate guidance and direction with respect to the various wellness programs accessed by communities, especially if they are provided with adequate training and resources.

At the same time, members believe that Nunavut needs a territory-wide coordinated approach to a number of health issues such as suicide prevention, substance abuse and domestic violence.

The committee looks forward to reviewing the department's plans for implementing its Community Wellness Strategy, as referenced in the department's recently tabled *Health Integration Initiative* document.

Given the holistic approach suggested by the Community Wellness Strategy, it is not clear to the committee why the department's business plan indicates that a new addictions strategy will be independently developed in the upcoming year, especially since the department tabled a Nunavut addictions and mental health strategy in 2002.

Mr. Chairman, members of the standing committee continue to have serious concerns regarding the implementation of the department's medical client travel policy. Members have also noted ongoing problems with the administration of the travel coordination services for the Baffin region. The committee would welcome a government decision to relocate these positions back to Iqaluit.

The committee looks forward to an update of what has been done to improve medical travel services for Nunavummiut. Members encourage the minister to work with her department to ensure that clear information about medical travel is made available to all clients, escorts, and health professionals.

In a recent exchange of correspondence with the minister, the committee was pleased to receive information on a number of these issues and looks forward to receiving the remainder of the information that we requested in the near future.

That concludes my opening remarks. I anticipate that individual members will also have questions and comments as we proceed. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Do members have any general comments? Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm very concerned with the direction that the department seems to be going over the last three years. Three years ago the Standing Committee on Government Operations, at public hearings with the Auditor General, were told by government officials that the department was finally going to be in the black.

Since that time, the minister had indicated last week that they're looking at little over \$10 million over budget for this fiscal year. And this is after we've already bumped up the base budget that was under funded by a little over \$20 million. There's some extra funding in there to deal with the accreditation issues at the hospital. I think it was a little over \$2 million more added in there. What's going on? The department, after six years, with all of the problems, we believed at the time that we adjusted the base budget to adequately reflect the needs of the department. It just seems to have gone totally out of control again.

In the minister's opening comments, she talks about a stable, qualified workforce. I have concerns, too ... it seems like a very high turnover rate in the senior officials at the department. Is that one of the problems why things aren't being monitored? What type of financial and management controls is the department putting in place to watch their spending?

One of the things she also mentioned in her opening comments with this latest transfer of payment, the bill payment staff going over to the Department of Finance, is that they could focus on proper budget development, financial projections, and training programs.

But I think the issue is what kind of responsibility or accountability is out there if we pass the budget, and there is a budget for each area that is being monitored and managed to work within. I've heard comments from all over this territory from different people saying they've heard that some people said, "Don't worry about the budget; just go ahead."

To me that's not acceptable. It seems like since the beginning of our government in 1999, is always like the health says people get sick and we can't tell them that we're not going to fly them out as an excuse to hide behind to just burn money.

We need to be assured that there is some accountability as to how the department spends its money. It seems like there is no accountability. Just go back and say we need more for medical travel. Are there accurate reflections in the budget? I think the budget that we have in front of us today is unrealistic. They have for medical travel, I think it is the same amount as last year and already they're over from last year.

In some cases maybe they're...we know we're going to go over in that area and no one's going to say no to that so we'll just under-budget in that area and if we do go over budget again we'll just come back to a supplementary again and we get more money.

I have very serious concerns over the financials controls in the department; why things seem to get out of hand. It is just a continual revolving door of senior staff that are there. I know that has to lead to some problems of monitoring and making sure that people know what they're doing. It seems like they take one step forward and then three steps backwards. I have a lot of concerns in this area and I will be asking the minister and officials, when they're in the witness table, a lot of question on that.

Some of the things that the Members of this House have voted on in the past and have been told they're going to happen aren't happening. We hear now that accreditationwe're told give us eighteen months and \$2 million and we'll get it fixed. And now a year into it, it's not going to happen for another year so that's 24 months, and maybe we'll be ready by then. They're changing the standards. What was the big rush to get that on then? It doesn't make sense.

Another thing that I am very concerned about, as the co-chair mentioned in his opening comments, the fact that the majority of concerns from MLAs here from their constituents are health related whether dealing with the staff at a health facility, or medical travel, or whatever. It is just the nature of the beast in that area that there are always concerns that are brought to our attention. Over the last few years we've worked to try to find a way to help alleviate that problem because every time when we try to ask about it here in the House it always no we can't talk about that because it's a person's private, confidential information.

For a couple of years now we have been told that the solution to this is we're going to hire a client services specialist or coordinator and then we find out that this position hasn't even been advertised. Why?

This Assembly last year approved the funding for that position. When we approved the department's main estimates I would assume that it was approved by Cabinet too before it came in, and they are looking for a very good explanation from the minister why they didn't even bother to advertise for that position.

Just look at what has been going on here for the last week and a half. How many concerns have been brought up that are health related; of individuals having concerns and they have nobody to go to.

We have told our constituents to raise their concerns with our client services coordinator. Are these just words to make us sound good? We make a decision on something and we expect that some direction be given and that commitments made on behalf of the government and the Assembly are not just words. They are actually commitments and actions and things have been done for it. What is the use of us being here to approve something if it is not going to be acted on?

Another thing that I know has been a big push for the department over the last few years was the *Care Closer to Home* Strategy. That seems to have fallen right off the radar now. I will be looking to find out exactly why that has happened.

In her opening comments, she also said that the health department recognizes we need to improve our recruitment and retention of staff. Are they just recognizing that now? How many years has this been going on? We have a contract in place with a consulting firm to hire international nurses. As the co-chair indicated, it hasn't been very successful.

Issues were brought up in the past and I know of cases where there were nurses living in communities with their partner who wanted to work there but couldn't because that position was being held for someone else that wasn't there yet, for an international nurse. "Well we can't give you a job there because we are holding that for somebody." Here is somebody that is living in a community and wants to work but can't.

My time is up so I will ask some questions when we get there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. General Comments. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also want to raise some concerns that I have. It is one of the biggest departments and it is very essential. The health centres, nursing stations, all over the Keewatin, we understand it is an essential service.

The staff go through very difficult times. As I stated, when I was under their care, there are physicians out there who work really hard and look after their clients very well. I would like to congratulate them and recognize them. There are some good people out there but I know there is room for improvement.

We hear all kinds of concerns from our constituents as a Member of the Legislative Assembly. I don't want to talk with them directly so I direct them to the minister. I feel I would be interfering with their work.

What I wanted to say was we hear about people who are leaving the north because rent is way too high. I believe that is true because according to the present government policy we know that people in government staff housing, not just the medical staff, but people who were in government housing go to public housing because it costs way too much to rent a government staff house.

I think there is a surplus even in Rankin because Inuit are starting to go to public housing units. What I want to say is that the essential services in the government, for example. Even if it costs one quarter more, they have to be provided housing even if they're subsidized higher, because it is an essential service.

I'm saying this because it is very difficult to attract nurses to come and work, and it's getting harder to get doctors to come to the communities.

When we are dealing with the Housing Corporation, if possible, nobody wants to pay rent but nowadays nothing is free. I think the government policy has to review the essential

services for nurses and doctors. If it will help to retain nurses and doctors to stay longer, then that policy will have to be changed. I wanted to bring that up.

Mr. Chairman, in the Keewatin, I'm not sure if the health centre in Rankin Inlet is a regional centre because when it opened almost a year and a half ago there were so many beds, and those beds have never been used. We feel like people who have heart problems should be kept overnight. Sometimes where they might require 24 hour care, even at 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning, there was an elder who tried walking home from the health centre.

Those are the things that need to be fixed, so I will be raising questions as to why those beds can't be used in Rankin Inlet.

More than once an elder told me they were having a heart problem. He had to call an ambulance because the health centre wouldn't answer and the taxi wouldn't come. Once he got a response from the ambulance, the driver, who was a fire chief, my colleague knows, they were told not to do that.

Once there was an investigation he had to be medivaced to Winnipeg. So, I want to tell the minister that the standards will have to be improved. I also want to bring up the Winnipeg Boarding Home.

My colleague from Rankin Inlet is aware that there are a number of problems that will have to be dealt with. Sometimes Inuit who are there don't feel too welcome. There are problems with food. So, I will be bringing those issues up too.

During the development of the Kivalliq Centre there was to be a boarding home. We still haven't heard anything. What is the status of the boarding home? Will the federal government fund it? Or are you in the process of negotiations? So, I will be asking questions with regards to those issues.

Let us be very careful. There are medical personnel; nurses and doctors who work very well and they should be recognized. Lastly, Mr. Chairman, every year in Rankin Inlet, there is an annual Christmas party and it is becoming very popular. The medical staff holds a Christmas party with the elders.

People enjoy it. Maybe if every community was like that there would be a lot less problems. As Members of the Legislative Assembly we fully support this. The nurses really enjoy eating with the elders and providing service to them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. I would like to apologize for going ahead of myself there. I haven't chaired the Committee of the Whole for a while. Anyway, we'll get back to the agenda once we finish with general comments. General comments, Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: I welcome the minister to Committee of the Whole today, and her opening comments.

Mr. Chairman, I've been a Member of the Legislative Assembly for three years. I'm going into the fourth year as we all are. Before that I was Mayor of Cambridge Bay for four years, and health issues were our top priority for my community.

I think everybody in my community at one time or another has been at the health centre to see doctors or nurses. For the most part, from what I know and understand, people are being treated, and treated well.

We have people who do rightfully feel that they are not getting proper treatment and they bring their concerns to mayors and to the Members of the Legislative Assembly.

Of course we have to respond to them. I do try to respond to them. Sometimes they're not happy, and sometimes they are satisfied. I think for the most part, given the environment we're in, the delivery of health in Nunavut is progressing.

I've been around Nunavut for quite a long time and I can say with honesty and certainty that it has improved, but we are operating in a very difficult and tough environment up here.

We have not only live here, but we have to travel, we have to put up with some awful weather conditions. The last two weeks here in Iqaluit, with the blizzards closing down the town a couple of times, it's not an easy environment to operate and deliver health.

I think about those things, but it came home to me last month when I read a Vancouver Sun article. I read an interview with the Minister of Health for the province of British Columbia. It was a very candid interview, and it crystallized what I've known for a long time about the Department of Health. He said that he is the third longest serving health minister in Canada and he's only been a minister for 18 months.

He's a bit of a fatalist; he says that he can be fired any day because he's not keeping people happy. He said that 50 percent of the time is spent on crisis management issues, and not just organizational issues, but personal issues for people calling him up or emailing and demanding attention.

We have 13 health ministers across Canada and he's the third longest serving. That was an interesting fact. And then I recalled that we had a Minister of Health who served five years, Mr. Picco. Mr. Picco heard from me quite often. I have to take my hat off to Mr. Picco for lasting five years. I am sure he had a lot of interesting experiences.

In the north we have to keep in mind that even though it's the largest territory, in 25 communities, we only have 31,000 people. The minister probably knows a lot of those people personally, and unlike a minister in the south where you might have problems with two million people, the chances of knowing anyone personally are fairly low unless

they are from your own riding. Up here, knowing a person personally must place even larger pressure on the minister to help them out.

Over the years, as a Mayor, and MLA that this department, unlike other government departments, is the center of attention daily. Either we or one of our loved ones, or friends that we know you, go to the health centre, it's just a fact of life. Everybody is concerned about the health centres, and the nurses, and doctors, and other medical professionals who are there will be able to help them.

It's no secret that in the Department of Health in Nunavut, and all the provinces in Canada, the costs are continuing to escalate. I don't know how you can control those costs. The doctor's fees go up, the salaries and wages go up. The health department has to compete with other government departments for their budget, their O&M and their capital costs. How do you control those costs when it's not like you can tell people don't get sick, when you get sick we can't medevac you to a proper medical care.

For this department we have to swallow the fact that the costs are going to continue to go up. We're going to continue to have to medevac people to the south. In terms of our retaining our health professionals, like doctors and nurses, in reality in this day and age we have to compete with the provinces. I read a story the other day that the province of Alberta is offering huge signing bonuses to doctors. They are even enticing doctors who have retired to come out of retirement to come and work for them and receive these signing bonuses.

I am aware from my conversations with some health professionals in the north that headhunting firms in the south working for provinces are calling up our health professionals in Nunavut and offering them jobs and benefits that we can't even to begin to imagine offering our staff up here because we can't afford it. If I was a doctor, or a nurse in Nunavut and someone called me you know, Mr. Peterson, whatever you're getting paid now we'll double your salary to come and work for us. How do you turn that down?

I am going to be interested to learn from the minister and her officials how they're going to compete with southern provinces, deep pocketed provinces in particular on a level playing field to recruit doctors, and nurses, and other health professionals to come and work in Nunavut.

The other issue in my riding, in particular, is housing for health professionals. That's no secret. We have a health facility in Cambridge Bay that should have 20 nurses and doctors and because we don't have the housing, the Department of Health can't hire those health professionals. Even if they did hire the health professionals, because of the GN's Staff Housing Policy and the rent scale, they'd be paying very expensive O&M costs to the government to rent those facilities.

How do you balance that, the recruitment of nurses and doctors, and pay them enough so that they can cover their rent and utilities in the health facility. Keep in mind that most of

the doctors and nurses are probably working 12 to 15-hour shifts, seven days a week. They're probably not even going to be spending much time at those houses.

I have concerns, and those concerns are that people worry a lot about their health. I mentioned earlier, none of us as MLAs or other officials like people to suffer or watch them suffer.

So we do have to ask the minister some questions and I hope her and officials will be able to give some good answers and some hope and optimism for the future that health is improving in the north, and will continue to improve, and we're taking steps to improve it.

I know the minister has had a lot of meetings in the south - Federal Provincial Territorial Meetings. I'm hoping that she can share some of her experiences and knowledge of some of those meetings and discussions with her colleagues. There is also the federal minister, she has meetings with that person. What direction is the federal level going.

And on a closing comment, Mr. Chairman, I would like to echo the comment of my colleague, Mr. Curley. There are a lot of doctors, nurses, and other health professionals who are working very, very hard in our communities to improve the lives and quality and standard of care daily for our citizens. I would like to recognize them and we do hold them in high esteem and regard. Hopefully through our line of questioning in the next few days we'll be able to help them out as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make a motion to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: There's a motion on the floor. We have a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion. Those opposed. The motion is carried. I will now rise to report progress.

Speaker (interpretation): Item 20. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Evyagotailak.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Evyagotailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 1 and the main estimates, and would like to report progress. Also, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Evyagotailak. There's a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Netser. The motion is in order. All those in favour, raise your hand please. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Item 21. Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to seek consent to go to Item 5. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The member is seeking unanimous consent to return to Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Ms. Aglukkaq, please proceed.

Revert to Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There is a visitor from Gjoa Haven and he was with the Legislative Assembly in the Northwest Territories. His name is Micheal Angutitaluk. I would like to welcome him. Thank you.

>> *Applause*

Chairman (interpretation): Welcome to the Gallery. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. Item 22. Orders of the Day. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A reminder; there is a meeting of the Management Services Board at 2:30 in the Tuktu Boardroom this afternoon.

Orders of the Day for March 19:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents

14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
 - Bill 4
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 1
 - Bill 2
 - Bill 3
20. Report of the Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Monday, March 19, at 1:00 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 14:12*

