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**Wednesday, October 31, 2007**

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**Iqaluit**

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

## Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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*Deputy Premier; Minister of Community and Government Services*

**Hon. Paul Okalik**

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut**  
**Wednesday, October 31, 2007**

**Members Present:**

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

**Item 1: Opening Prayer**

**Speaker** (Hon. James Arreak)(interpretation): Good afternoon. I would like to ask Mr. Evyagotailak to say the opening prayer.

>>*Prayer*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Evyagotailak. Good afternoon, Mr. Premier, Ministers, and my colleagues. Going to the Orders of the Day. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Minister Picco.

**Item 2: Ministers' Statements**

**Minister's Statement 101 – 2(4): Minister Netser Absent from the House**

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to inform the House that Minister Netser will not be in the House today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Picco. Ministers' Statements. Minister Picco.

**Minister's Statement 102 – 2(4): 1st Art! Invitational Student Art Competition**

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon and Happy Halloween to you and all the ghouls in the listening audience.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that Alie Kippomee, a student in the Jewellery Program at Nunavut Arctic College, was the Nunavut winner of the 2007 invitational art competition sponsored by the Bank of Montreal Organization Financial Group. Alie, as many of the members know, is from Mittimatalik. He submitted a woodcut print on paper entitled "*In the World of Spirits.*" It shows a man holding a wooden mask with a demonic face that dates from the Dorset Era.

Mr. Speaker, Alie's print joins the prints of previous Nunavut Arctic College winners in the Bank of Montreal's collection.

Serpio Ittusardjuat from Igloolik with "*Raven Snow Dance*"  
Pootoogook Qiatsuk for "*Our Dream*" from Kinngait  
Pootoogook Noah for "*Walrus*" from here in Iqaluit  
Sarah Novalinga from Sanikiluaq with "*Sanikiluaq Way of Hunting*"

Mr. Speaker, Alie was invited to attend the reception in Toronto where his work is being shown at the exhibition in the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art.

Mr. Speaker, this is another excellent example of the creativity of Nunavut's artists and the richness of Inuit art. Please join me in congratulating Alie Kippomee, as well as all Nunavut Arctic College winners in the Bank of Montreal's collection. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' Statements. Member for Baker Lake, Honourable David Simailak.

### **Minister's Statement 103 – 2(4): Report on Infrastructure Improvements, Iqaluit International Airport**

**Hon. David Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to announce that in the next few weeks the rehabilitation of apron one and the re-opening of taxiway alpha at the Iqaluit International Airport will be complete.

The Government of Nunavut has committed \$1,193,732 towards this project and the Government of Canada, under the Airports Capital Assistance Program, has committed \$10,743,585.

Mr. Speaker, these safety enhancements at Iqaluit International Airport will help us meet the growing passenger and cargo needs of the territory. It will help ensure greater safety and it will add to the economic potential of the facility.

The Iqaluit International Airport is currently processing over 100,000 passengers and 21,000 aircraft landings and take offs each year.

This project to improve the Iqaluit International Airport was included in the master plan adopted in 1999. Completion of this project advances the implementation of the master plan and sets the stage for the eventual relocation of the airport terminal operations to the new apron. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Ministers' Statements. Item 3. Members' Statements. Mr. Tapardjuk.

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

#### **Member's Statement 221 – 2(4): Search & Rescue in June 2007 at Igloolik**

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This person was already thanked and congratulated by the Members of the Legislative Assembly. They were looking for Inuki this last fall and he was lost out on the land for 28 days.

We are all aware that this was a hardship for everybody involved in Nunavut and it takes a long time to look for the lost people out on the land. The federal government and the Nunavut Government assisted us, and also the local authorities and organizations were involved.

Although they were volunteering, they were assisting Igloolik people and Nunavummiut. I would like to thank everybody and name them all but it would take too long. For this reason, the Mayor of Igloolik told me that there were 200 volunteers involved in the rescue of Inuki and assisted in any way while they were looking for him out on the land for 28 days.

I would also like to thank each and every one of the Members of the Legislative Assembly, and also, the CGI were looking after us really well when we were assisted by the RCMP locally. I would also like to thank Iqalummiut, Rankin Inlet people, Pond Inlet, and also Hall Beach.

The people from Arviat, Broughtin Island, Pangnirtung, Clyde River, Pond Inlet, Lake Harbour, and Baker Lake also assisted us financially when they were looking for Inuki. We also got assisted financially from Nunavik, Sugluk Co-op. Nunavut *Parnaijiit* and Isuma Productions were also assisting us financially. We were also assisted by Nunasi.

I would like to ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Minister Tapardjuk is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Please go ahead, Minister Tapardjuk.

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Members.

The Nunasi Corporation was assisting us, as well as Baffinland, Rock Bay, and DND. They assisted us financially by providing aircrafts and helicopters. I would like to thank the people of Igloolik and the search and rescue team.

The Mayor Paul Quassa had not given up and kept pushing to find the man. He kept pushing and continued the search and rescue. They work really hard in the community.



The search and rescue had a chair, our Sergeant-at-Arms, that is sitting down there was also involved. They worked really hard. The relatives of the lost were very patient and did not give up.

For this reason, they have all given us strength looking at the way they operated in the community. I think we all want to understand that this was very hard for us and sensitive, and although they were very tired, they kept pushing to find the person.

Mr. Speaker, we are shown again that Nunavummiut base their search and rescue through love and striving to contain the life of the lost, also the people working together and not wanting to lose one person and not giving up. I want to thank everybody. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

#### **Member's Statement 222 – 2(4): Building a Bridge for Change Workshop**

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to tell the House about a very innovative and successful three-day workshop that was held in Cambridge Bay last week.

Mr. Speaker, over the years our Cambridge Bay Wellness Centre has introduced many successful programs and workshops that have helped our residents. I have often mentioned their excellent work for our community in this House.

Mr. Speaker, we have often heard that the generational gap between elders, adults and youth is increasing and that more should be done in our communities to bring them together.

Mr. Speaker, last week the wellness centre hosted a workshop called, "*Building a Bridge for Change – Bringing Youth and Adults Together.*" The workshop was facilitated by the Recovery Foundation, which also facilitated the very successful "*High Risk Kids*" workshop last spring. It was well-attended by youth, adults, and elders who desire to get to know each other better.

Mr. Speaker, it is intended that those participants in the three-day workshop:

- Experience positive interaction and communication, and develop greater respect, appreciation and understanding of each other.
- Find their voices and learn to speak out with dignity, respect and honesty, and build a bridge of caring, support and trust between youth and adults.

- Look at issues of drugs, alcohol, violence, bullying and other destructive behaviours that are destroying the community.
- Focus on the positive and work together.
- Start talking to one another and develop new skills and awareness through challenging and FUN activities.

Mr. Speaker, one of the adult participants summed the workshop up for me like this. “Not a dry eye in the building everyday; it’s just awesome!” And, “It’s a must-have workshop for elders and youth.”

Mr. Speaker, I would like the House to join me in thanking the Cambridge Bay Wellness Centre for once again delivering a successful workshop, and congratulate the many youth, adults, and elders who participated and made it such a wonderful success.

Mr. Speaker, I would also encourage my colleagues to call the wellness centre if they are interested in any Recovery Foundation workshops for their communities. They can provide contact information and references. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Members’ Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet South and Whale Cove, Ms. Brown.

#### **Member’s Statement 223 – 2(4): Gratitude to Constituents & Happy Anniversary**

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in recognition of my constituents in Whale Cove. I am going to be going to the community of Whale Cove once we finish this session, weather permitting.

Mary Kanayuk-Voisy is my assistant and she keeps me up to date with anything and I would like to thank her for all that.

The people of Rankin Inlet are also dear to me. My assistant there, Thomas Arnaut Tiktak, I thank you very much. He lets me know and made aware of any issues that come up.

Today, I also wish to congratulate John Tatty and his wife, Naujara. They have been married for forty-two years. I also wish the people of Nunavut to enjoy a good Halloween, an annual event we all experience with joy. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

**Member's Statement 224 – 2(4): Illegal Drug Trade**

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today; I believe it was last year that I made a statement about this that our government has to work harder on the drug trade. These are mind altering substances being taken by our young people and it is something that needs to be addressed. Many of us the illegal drugs understand what they are actually, but many of our young people know of these drugs and use them.

Many young people are dying because they are using too much of these substances and falling into depression as a result of such drugs. These drugs and pills that come to the communities are coming into Nunavut by air or ship. I have told the government previously to do a better job of finding ways to help people in Nunavut deal with this issue.

The government responded, however, by saying that the RCMP are working on this. I can tell you the RCMP should not be the only ones working on this.

We need a strategy to combat the problem of drugs in the communities. We need to train parents and elders as to what they are. Our young people are suicidal and getting to hopelessness and depression because of too much drugs. Many of the users don't know what drugs actually contain and what they can do. I want to tell the government the drugs come in from Montreal, Winnipeg, Churchill, and even from Yellowknife.

I urge you need to check with freight forwarders before the drugs are loaded onto the aircraft. Use dogs. I'm sure drugs are being offloaded from ships as we speak, in Iqaluit for distribution in the Baffin region, to our schools and youth.

We can stem the tide of this trade, starting now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Members' Statement. Member for Tunnunig, Mr. Arvaluk.

**Member's Statement 225 – 2(4): Inuit Employment Percentage Low in Decentralized Communities**

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to talk about the aboriginal people who are working with the government, specifically with the federal government. It seems like there's a decreasing number and they don't seem to be getting the support they need in my community of Pond Inlet. I'm not sure what it's like in the other communities.

The government had a goal of filling a certain percentage of positions with aboriginal people. It's also in the agreement and a law of the federal government to put in a certain number of people.

I don't think we should just be standing in the sidelines anymore. It's up to us to lobby the government to fill the required number of positions with aboriginal people. The reason I'm saying that is because the Inuit who work for the government are usually in the lower ranking positions.

Mr. Speaker, during the appropriate time I will be asking questions to the Minister of Human Resources about what goals the government has in filling those positions and why the Inuit are leaving the positions that they held. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. (interpretation ends) Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit East, Mr. Picco.

### **Member's Statement 226 – 2(4): 2007 Annual Elders' Conference in Iqaluit**

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Iqaluit had the opportunity from August 27 to 31 to host the annual gathering of our elders.

Mr. Speaker, over 200 elders from across Nunavut and indeed from Northern Quebec were in the Capital for the event. Mr. Speaker, coordination for the event was provided by the City of Iqaluit's Recreation Department and our own Iqaluit Elders' Group. The elders shared stories and reacquainted with friends they hadn't seen for many years.

Mr. Speaker, guest speakers included our own Commissioner Ann Hanson. Mr. Speaker, the elders had an opportunity to participate in baseball and soccer games. They had an opportunity to visit locations around Iqaluit, and enjoyed many games and local food.

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to thank Lizzie and Jonah Kelly who helped coordinate and facilitate the conference; the Department of CLEY, who provided financial support; and Mr. Speaker, especially the people of Iqaluit who donated tons of country food and provided a warm welcome to all the visiting elders.

Mr. Speaker, I also wanted to take this opportunity to thank the elders themselves for supporting the canteen during the event to help build a new cathedral here in Iqaluit. The fundraising committee of the church raised over \$1,000 during the elder's gathering. Thank you, elders.

Mr. Speaker, the elders' gathering was a great success and our elders look forward to seeing their friends and other elders at the next elder's gathering which is going to be in Nunavik in Northern Quebec. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

**Speaker:** Thank you. Members' Statements. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Ms. Aglukkaq.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize an individual who is in the Gallery with us today. I think that she is well-known to many of the MLAs from the Baffin, and that is Trudy, who is the Manager of the Ottawa Boarding Home who is in Iqaluit this week. She does excellent work in providing service to Baffinmiut, and I would like to welcome her to the Gallery and welcome her to Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Aglukkaq. Welcome to the Gallery. (interpretation ends) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Item 6. Oral Questions. One moment please. Member for Tunnunig, Mr. Arvaluk.

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

#### **Question 285 – 2(4): Update on Inuit Employment Rates**

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the Member's Statement that I made, we are concerned about whether the employees are getting the proper support. Could the minister tell me how fast they were filling the positions since he took his term? Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Minister of Human Resources, Mr. Louis Tapardjuk.

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Looking at the number of Inuit filling positions in the GN, following *Article 23*, are approximately 50 percent. So half of the positions are filled by Inuit and we also have a goal of going up to 56 percent within the next three years.

There has been an increase in the number of Inuit employed within the government departments. Mr. Speaker, there is approximately 50 percent Inuit employment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary, Mr. Arvaluk.

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We're talking about the whole of Nunavut when we're saying 50 percent of the positions are filled. Could the minister indicate to us if there is the same amount of positions filled in other communities or are we just talking about specifics? Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Mr. Louis Tapardjuk.

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The 50 percent that I'm referring to and of course, there's varying percentages of positions in the other communities, for example, there are the clerks and receptionists, where these positions are filled by more Inuit. For the semi-skilled and the skilled positions, there are less numbers.

In some of the communities, there are more Inuit filling the positions and less in some. If we were to look at the numbers of Inuit who are working in the government, we're referring to teachers, government employees, nurses and so on. But to date, 50 percent is for the whole of Nunavut. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are well aware that there are a large number of Inuit teachers in the communities when we're referring to them as government employees.

If we look at the other positions, for example who are working in the government departments, there doesn't seem to be an increase in the number of Inuit employees. I think some of the positions that are filled by term are usually extended because they can't fill the position.

Is there a support system set up within the government where the Inuit can go for help or if they need support of any kind? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Minister Louis Tapardjuk.

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government is training Inuit through the Sivuliqtiksat Program. They also have interns filled and we also use other programs so that there is continual training involved for the Inuit employees, so the Inuit can also fill higher positions.

We do have a slight problem and that's a lack of money. The Nunavut Government wanted help from the federal government so that they can fully implement *Article 23*. Thomas Berger gave us a report but there's not much we can do when we don't have the money to increase the number.

At this time we are looking at the Inuit who have filled those positions and we're sort of looking like a support group or some kind of an entity so that they can voice their concerns and also voice the type of support that they require. We are currently looking at that.

The Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth and the Department of Human Resources are now working to set up that entity, and look at increasing the support that is required by the Inuit positions and how we can improve the numbers. So we're looking at all that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The person on my right asked whether the government has made any plans to make an improvement in the system. The Nunavut Government employees have to start filling positions.

My question is: has the government set up a strategy to improve the numbers to improve the training, especially among the elders and the youth, who are able and willing to fill the positions in the government system? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Minister Louis Tapardjuk.

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your question.

We are working extremely hard to make sure that there is an increase, not only the Department of Human Resources, but every government department is working to increase the numbers.

We have a training program set up for social workers and for nurses. In the communities we have NTEP programs. There are also other training and assistance given. The government also has the Summer Student Program so that when students finish their schooling, they may want to pursue employment in the government after going to high school.

We're looking at increasing to over 50 percent within the next three years. We think that would be the rate to go if we're aiming for 2020. So we're trying to increase the percentages. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 286 – 2(4): Update on Concerns with KBDC**

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for Economic Development and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of years, I've been raising issues and concerns with an organization and that's the Kivalliq Business Development Centre. I would like to ask the

minister if he has done anything to look at and finding out about some of the issues and concerns that I've raised in that particular case. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Honourable David Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department is not in the position to comment on the specific issues regarding the situation because it's an act of legal matter. However, the department does not grant or administer business loans, but we do provide a contribution to the business development centres to help offset their community costs.

In terms of what's been happening, I've asked for a study of all three of the regional business development centres. That report should be done by the end of March 2008 and the progress report on the study itself by the end of December of this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your first supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wasn't looking at what the department was doing in any particular case but just in general with the organization on looking at those things.

The minister indicated that he has asked a review to be done. Could he provide us with information as far as the terms of reference of that review? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister David Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I have asked for a review of the operations of all of the three business development centres; a review of their actual operations. I have also written the chair of each organization for a representative on that working group that's doing the actual study.

The terms of reference are based on those used by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency for a recent review that they did of the 41 communities and organizations in Atlantic Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your second supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the minister commit to providing this House with a copy of the terms of reference for that review? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will certainly look into that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.



**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the minister looking into that. I know he can't just say yes without checking into it first, but can he give an indication as to when he would be able to know if he would be able to table those terms of reference? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I should know some time this afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 287 – 2(4): Continue to Lobby Federal Government: Northern Deductions**

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, last night I read the Federal Finance Minister's October 30 Economic Statement with a lot of interest.

Mr. Speaker, I know the reduction in GST to five percent is welcome news for all Canadian consumers. I was disappointed that there wasn't any announcement of the improvement in the Northern Residents Tax Deduction.

**An Hon. Member:** Shame, shame.

**Mr. Peterson:** That deduction came into force in 1987 and hasn't been improved since. Our inflation has gone up 64 percent.

Mr. Speaker, at one point our minister indicated that the three territorial governments were planning to make a presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance Pre-Budget Consultations that were going to be held here in Iqaluit but they were postponed.

My question for the minister: will the minister tell the House if he, his NWT and Yukon counterparts will continue to lobby Ottawa on this important issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Minister of Finance, Honourable David Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, all three continue to work on this very important issue. 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 commitment; I assume it's a commitment.

Mr. Speaker, although they didn't get an opportunity to make a presentation to the Standing Committee on Finance Pre-Budget Consultations, can the minister tell the House if the Government of Nunavut had an opportunity to present Ottawa with any arguments to make a case that Nunavummiut, particularly low income earners, need some tax relief from the federal government to offset the very high cost of living in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Minister Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) We have been continually working on that, whether it is in Ottawa; the Finance Ministers meet together and look at this. The three territorial governments have struck a committee to deal with this issue and we've been lobbying the federal government.

Every time we meet with either one of the ministers, whether it is either one of the territories, we keep continually bringing this up with the federal minister. The committee has also been working on drafting documents on why we need to increase this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister. It's good to know that the three territorial governments are working so closely together.

MLAs assume that the minister and his officials have analyzed the federal minister's October 30 Economic Statement with much care and diligence. I wonder if the minister could tell the House: is there anything in this statement that is a specific benefit to Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Minister Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the Economic Statement made by the Federal Finance Minister yesterday stated that he would reduce the personal Income Tax and GST rate. Those reductions are going to be beneficial to Nunavummiut as soon as they are tabled.

The private sector will also benefit from the reduction of Corporate Tax rates. Those are the ones that we noticed during yesterday's Economic Statement. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure in the coming days we'll have more time to analyze the Economic Statement, and perhaps the minister would be in a position

to table some information that clearly outlines what those benefits are so that we can assess them ourselves about how beneficial it is.

Mr. Speaker, the minister mentioned earlier that the three territorial governments have a good working relationship. I believe it's a good strategy to have a strong relationship with the federal government as well, particularly when, in Nunavut's case, 90 percent of our revenues come from the senior level of government.

My question for the minister: can the minister tell the House if Nunavut and the other two territories see eye-to-eye on general matters of fiscal policy with the federal government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Minister Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We've been working with the territorial governments and we continually work on finance issues. We've been lobbying the federal government to spend more money in the North to benefit not just Nunavut but the whole of Canada.

We have been continually working on these issues, and every time we meet with the federal government, we lobby them to invest more in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 288 – 2(4): Status of Arctic Bay Health Centre**

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for Community and Government Services.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, for some time now, I have been raising concerns about the physical state of the Arctic Bay Health Centre. Recently, even more problems have developed due to the landscape not being level. Can the minister explain how her department evaluates the state and status of buildings such as the Arctic Bay Health Centre? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Minister of Community and Government Services, Honourable Levinia Brown.

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, every time they do an investigation with the Department of Community and Government Services, the Technical Services do the investigation or evaluation at the request of various departments. So therefore, we do not go there and evaluate ourselves.

It has to be at the request of other departments, whether it is a school building or a health centre, which you just asked. The various departments have to make a request, and then our Technical Services do the evaluation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Minister. Your first supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The Arctic Bay Health Centre is one of the oldest health centre buildings in Nunavut. I understand the health centre in Taloyoak is also very old.

Can the minister tell me whether technical standards and evaluation reports have been prepared for these two health centres? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker**: Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Minister Brown.

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If these units are old, they would have been evaluated. If it's the client department, they request CGS Technical Services to do an evaluation. I'm sure there is a report available if there was an evaluation done. It's evident that when these buildings are old, they do evaluations or inspections. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Minister. Your second supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

**Mr. Barnabas**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm interested in comparing the status of these two health centres. Will the minister commit to providing me with the copies of the reports before the end of today? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker**: Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Minister Brown.

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's 2:30, just kidding. If either one of my officials are listening, yes, I believe I can ask my officials to work on that. At Technical Services, I will ask my deputy to look into that and if they can make it available, I will do so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 289 – 2(4): Not Raise Power Rates**

**Mr. Curley**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Energy. Mr. Speaker, it may be Halloween night but the minister did not have to get into a spooky world of spirits.

>> *Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Energy is regarding the high world oil prices. The minister does not need to be reminded that the world oil price is increasing every month but, Mr. Speaker, the minister needs to be reminded though that Nunavut consumers, hunters and homeowners can no longer afford to pay for Nunavut fuel prices.

Will the minister commit to this House that you will not raise NPC power rates at any time soon? Thank you.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Minister of Energy, Honourable Ed. Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco** (interpretation): I am very scared of you. Scary.

>>*Laughter*

(interpretation ends) It's Halloween, I guess, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to state to the honourable member that, no, I'm not here as the boogeyman or a ghoul or anything like that. I'm here to help the member. We, as a government, are here to help the people of Nunavut.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we've actually just announced, as of today, October 31, 2007, a decrease in the fuel rider for Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

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

**Mr. Curley:** I know, Mr. Speaker, that it's Halloween Night. The minister does not have to act like a clown because he normally does.

>>*Laughter*

But, Mr. Speaker, to be more serious, the minister should tell exactly what the government's plans are, not what happened last year. We're dealing with high oil prices today. Will the minister tell the Nunavut Power Corporation that they should not and will not raise power rates during the winter consumption period? Thank you.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Minister Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All I can say to the member and I don't mean to say he's clowning around, and indeed, if there are any clowns here. I would suggest to the honourable member that there is no plan of the Government of Nunavut to increase power rates during the winter season, or indeed, in the next 12 months.

We had an increase two years ago of about 16 percent, I believe it was at the time, on rates, and as I just said earlier, we've actually decreased the fuel rider from 6.5 cents per kilowatt hour to 6.40 cents per kilowatt hour. Now, that is a small decrease, Mr. Speaker, but it is a decrease in the rider.

So hopefully that will not spook the member but give him the level of comfort that he seems not to have had for a long time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your second supplementary, Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. I appreciate the minister's comments. I don't believe the minister could spook anyone around here; they are now too smart to...

>>*Laughter*

... but I want to be serious. Mr. Speaker, the minister, if I understand him correctly, he will not accept recommendations from NPC or the Public Utilities Board, and that he now commits to this House that he will not accept any recommendations to increase power rates soon.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Minister Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't intend to scare people, frighten them, or bring them forward to any type of Metro Golden Meyer, MGM movie scenario of "The Exorcist."

What I would suggest to the member that what he is asking for is actually in place. We have a subsidy in place for the first 1,000 kilowatt hours during the winter months and we have a subsidy in place for the first 750 kilowatt hours during the summer months, and Mr. Speaker, there is no intention, at this time, of the Power Corporation to bring forth any type of increase that I have seen.

However, after saying that, we do have checks and balances in place to provide an open and transparent, and indeed, a ghostly-like presence on power rates and those ghostly-like presences are transparent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 290 – 2(4): Update on Implementing “Junk Food” Tax**

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for Finance and there's going to be no tricks or treats in here.

Minister Picco missed an opportunity for a trick on Halloween when he could have said, "Yes, we are raising things," just to fool everybody on Halloween.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister responsible for Finance and I know in the last year there were some changes brought around for taxes to increase taxes on what we call the 'SIN' taxes.

I guess today would be, being Halloween, an appropriate day to ask the minister, at the time I had asked him to commit to looking into a Junk Food Tax, which is a big hot item that's going to be out there today. I'm just wondering if the minister could give us an update as to what progress, if any, they've made at looking at implementing a tax like that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister of Finance, Honourable David Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, the department is still looking at the whole issue of junk food taxes. We're struggling with the issue a bit because it's become very clear that it'll hit the people it should not hit the most. We are still looking at the issue; whether we will go ahead with it or not. We're struggling at this point but we are still looking at it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your first supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister indicated that it'll hit the people that will be affected the most and that it shouldn't. The same argument could be said for the taxes they raised for alcohol and tobacco. The impact of the sale of those products affects the same people. The whole idea behind it is that they are trying to find ways to reduce that stuff being purchased. Like I said, we are paying in the long term for health care reasons in all those areas.

So I would ask the minister not to dwell on it too much. It's the same argument that they used for the increase in tobacco and alcohol taxes. Why wouldn't they use that same argument looking at the same unhealthy effects of the consumption of junk food as well? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an active file. We are looking at it. We will come to some conclusion some time soon. Yes, we're still working on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your second supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister give an indication of when they may be looking at coming forward with some type of legislative proposal to address that issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We should be in the position some time soon to clearly state which direction we're going to go with this file. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If you look at it, we have a little over 11 months left on our term, probably. I'm just wondering if the minister is saying that "some time soon" means that we'll be able to look at legislation like that in the life of this Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's quite possible if we decide to go ahead with the Junk Food Tax. As I said, we should know that in the very near future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 291 – 2(4): Lead Minister on Suicide Prevention Strategy**

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier announced a release of the Suicide Intervention Prevention Strategy at the end of June in a news release on June 29. We were encouraged to see the Government of Nunavut has made progress on this important initiative. I hope that it helps our communities and residents. We hear about suicide and attempted suicide it seems like every week in Nunavut.

Interdepartmental coordination and strengthening relationships seem to be at the heart of the strategy. My question for the Premier: can the Premier tell the House who the lead minister is who will be accountable for the success of the strategy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Premier of Nunavut, Honourable Paul Okalik.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have worked really hard on this. We are working with Health and Social Services because we cannot do it alone and as a government, we can only try and assist those people who do consider suicide. Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. (interpretation ends) Your first supplementary, Mr. Peterson.



**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for that information. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Nunavut's news release said that they would use existing resources to establish an office with a staff of three.

My question for the Premier: can the Premier tell the House if any specific dollars have been allocated to the strategy to date? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The staff that we are currently using will be helping by collecting information to run an office. We want it to run very smoothly for the benefit of all Nunavummiut. Thank you.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Your second supplementary, Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for that update. Mr. Speaker, it's important that when we implement these strategies that we know how successful they are a year from now, two years from now, or even 10 years from now, and ongoing in the interim.

I wonder if the Premier can tell the House if he can explain to us how the Government of Nunavut will measure the success of this strategy once it's implemented. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This will be ongoing. There was the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Social Services.

So what we're trying to do is to make it into one so that we can help the people. At this time, we are not sure but we certainly want to see a decrease in suicide. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Your final supplementary, Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Premier for that answer. Mr. Speaker, at the Kitikmeot Inuit Association Annual General Meeting, suicide was discussed among the youth and elders, and women's groups. They're urging the Government of Nunavut and other organizations to put some strategies in place to help the communities with suicide issues and help people.

I sense that there wasn't a whole lot of communication at that meeting with the Government of Nunavut. I think communication with the communities is important for the successful implementation of the strategy.

With that in mind, my question for the Premier: can the Premier tell us, to date, how the Government of Nunavut has communicated this strategy to the local wellness workers in the communities who have to work with people with suicide issues? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That's exactly what we're trying to do; to do that so that there will be good communication between the communities and the government without a concern to work together so that we can make a dent in the number of suicides. We have to work together with the community and work with the families, even though it is one of the most difficult things to tackle in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Oral Questions. Member for Tunnunig, Mr. Arvaluk.

#### **Question 292 – 2(4): Streetlights in Pond Inlet on April to August**

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Energy.

When the Premier was in Pond Inlet last month with his colleagues, the CGS Minister and Transportation Minister along with Mr. Akesuk, they were asked why the streets are lit during April to August when we have the sun out. It costs \$10,000 a month when they have the lights on for that period of time. Why is that minister? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Minister of Energy, Honourable Ed. Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did have an opportunity to speak with the Premier after his visit to Pond Inlet and he relayed the concerns to me about the lights. I think that, just for a little clarification, each pole light in Nunavut has a sensor, and that sensor automatically turns on the light when it gets dusk and getting dark, and of course, the light automatically would go off when it gets light out.

In some cases, you have a sensor that is malfunctioning. It is my understanding that there were some lights in Pond Inlet that were malfunctioning because of the sensor issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your first supplementary, Mr. Arvaluk.

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Is this rectified up to date? Are the lights going to be turned off during this winter because they are costing the government \$10,000 a month for the local energy? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding, and again, being familiar with Pond Inlet, as we get further into the year, it's getting darker there and the lights will come on. What we have tried to do is look at the sensor issue on those street lights and determine what the best course of action is.

In most cases, it's just a matter of changing the sensor. It is my understanding, Mr. Speaker, with the information provided to me that that has been done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your second supplementary, Mr. Arvaluk.

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think everywhere everybody knows, especially most other Canadians know, that when you ask for service, when you get service, you pay for the service. That's agreed to between the two parties.

But hamlets didn't seem to ask to have the lighting service, especially in May, June, July, and August, not just in Pond but in other High Arctic communities, too. I don't think they ask for that street lighting service. Why is the Power Corporation charging them for it? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Minister Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I understand the member correctly, what happens, Mr. Speaker, is that in any community, not just the member's community but in any community in Nunavut, indeed, in Canada, where you have an electrical utility company, they provide the light service.

The hamlet, the town, the city, the village contracts the Power Corporation to install lights and they say, "Can you put a light at a certain location?" And then the Power Corporation moves ahead and does that.

If, for example, the Hamlet of Pond Inlet would like lights removed from different parts of the community, then they can make that application or request to the Power Corporation. If they would like to add more lights to the community in certain locations where it may be darker and so on, they also can do that.

However, when we look at the lights that may have been on and that there might have been extra charges to the hamlet, if they are able to identify those lights, and we can identify those lights because we have been able to fix it because of the sensor problem, then that's something that we can look at with the power bill for the hamlet itself which pays for the street lights to see if there is an opportunity for reimbursement for power used that should not have been used. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your final supplementary, Mr. Arvaluk.

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Isn't it the responsibility of the Power Corporation to check if the street lighting systems are not malfunctioning rather than the hamlet? I mean, why should the hamlet have to go around and find out about these things to tell you this is broken, etcetera? I don't think I can accept that.

Will the minister then ensure that his staff, in those communities who are affected by this malfunctioning street lighting system, be instructed to make sure that the service is not provided when they're not required, especially in the summer time? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Minister Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the member knows, the people working in our power plant live in our communities and they are quite aware of the situation in regard to the street lights.

What we try to do on a regular basis on community visits in communities is we replace lights that are broken that have a sensor problem. So in this case, in the community, there seems to have been an issue with the sensor and the Power Corporation people would then move forward and fix it.

However, as I just indicated to the member, if the hamlet feels, for example, in this case, that they've paying for lights that have been on during the summer time, and they're paying that bill, then yes, it's up to them to bring that information forward to the Power Corporation.

It's no different than the member who's paying any type of bill that is receiving a service or is not receiving a service which he is paying, or is a receiving what he hasn't paid for, the same system would be in place as per any business.

So I thank the member for bringing this forward to the House and we'll follow up with the situation in the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. Barnabas.

### **Question 293 – 2(4): Update on Medical Travel Co-ordination**

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister responsible for Health and Social Services.

Even today, patients sent out for medical care and left behind are still increasing, particularly here in the Baffin where we have the largest population. Mr. Speaker, the service having been decentralized to Pangnirtung, and the elders and employees who have to stay at Tammaartarvik Boarding Home, and with patients having to be assigned

to accommodations in hotels and so on, especially government employees have to make their own arrangements for accommodation when they can't board the airplane.

When people arrive into town for meetings or to see an osteoporosis specialist, many arrive en masse. At the same time, all kinds of meetings and conferences take place with the resulting shortage of accommodations for patients left behind.

I would like to ask the minister for an update on whether the situation with the department responsible for patient accommodations being in Pangnirtung? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. From what I have been advised, the issues related to travel for patients, complaints have been reduced for travel from individuals travelling to health centres, or to the hospital here from the communities.

I'm not aware of any new complaints of people missing their flights and so on. If the member is aware of a person, I can look into that. As far as I'm aware, the complaints from patients have significantly been reduced based on the statistics of the operations in Pangnirtung have in place.

So if the member is aware of a person, I would be pleased to follow through with that review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes the flight comes through our community on the weekend when there are no staff working.

For those that are left behind, they have told me that they have to be on stand-by in order to travel and they'll get on if there's space. So, why is this happening with the patients that are going home or coming down? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think there are two different issues here: the first one is related to the coordination of travel for patients' tickets and the second one is whether there are seats available on the flights or not.

The practice has been that whenever a person is done with all their appointments, that person would be booked on the first available seat travelling out of Iqaluit to various communities.

So if there is a seat available, we would immediately book the person on the first available flight. In some cases, those flights are booked, so that the booking would be to the next available flight where there is a seat travelling to communities throughout the Baffin.

So I think there are two distinctions there: one is the whole coordination and the other is the availability of seats on the airline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't think she fully understands what she's talking about. As I was saying, it's harder to get on a flight on the weekends because there are patients that are left behind. For this reason, when there's bad weather, they can't go home, and later on, the flight is full for the next available flight.

There are patients that are behind and they have to call Pangnirtung to the GN. They have to check out from the hotel and when they get back to the hotel, if there's a big conference there and there's no room for them in the hotels, there are completely no rooms, so they have to find their own accommodations. They have to call to Pangnirtung to get their tickets rearranged.

How is this rectified now? Have you rectified this problem up to now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In terms of the specific concern the member has related to that individual, once again, I can look into that.

We are trying to provide coordination of travel of patients out of here. Yes, sometimes the weather is bad; that's a reality in the North. In those cases, we would do the re-booking of those individuals on the next available flight, and on the next available flight, there may be a seat but the blizzard can continue. So we continue to provide follow ups to those individuals. Sometimes those are in the evenings, sometimes those are in the weekends but we have staff that is available to provide assistance.

As well, we have an arrangement with the airline at the airport of who is notified of medical travel clients that are travelling and they are available to assist clients at the airport when there is re-booking required due to weather and so on.

Once the ticket is arranged and the plane is delayed or rescheduled for the next day, the airline counters re-books those individuals on the next available flight, weather permitting. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the unilingual elders, I know myself that this has happened. People couldn't get home for a whole week and they had to keep calling to Pangnirtung to make arrangements for their available flight.

Those unilingual people need to be supported and assisted. Why was this elder here for three weeks, stuck in Iqaluit? This is a problem. It wasn't organized. What is the situation with the unilingual elders that are not able to call on their own to get help and even able to call to the airline ticket agents? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of an elder being stuck here for three weeks. If that was a serious issue at the time, I would have liked to be notified so that I can follow up to make sure assistance was provided to an elder that required travelling. At the same time, in most cases, unilingual elders have escorts. So we have been trying to improve the services for medical travel along the way.

In cases like that, I would like to hear about that. If there's an individual that waited here for three weeks, I would like the name of that person, and then we can follow up to see who the person is and what exactly happened so that we can address some of these concerns that may be of assistance related issues.

Until such time, without the name, it's difficult to pinpoint exactly what the issue is when we process over 15,000 travel tickets in 12 months in the Baffin alone. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker**: Thank you, Minister. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit Centre, Mr. Tootoo.

#### **Question 294 – 2(4): Option on Contractors Not Paying Payroll Tax**

**Mr. Tootoo**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would really like to ask my question to the Minister responsible for Education, Energy, Immigration, Multiculturalism, Homelessness, and our very own House Leader, but I'm not going to. I'd like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, one of the other things that the minister had committed to looking at for me in the last year or so, is when the issue of the Payroll Tax came up. As we all know, the Payroll Tax is designed to capture money leaving the territory from people that don't live here in Nunavut.

I know that the government has had a growing demand. There seem to be more and more people working on contract. One of the things is that those contract employees are not captured in the Payroll Tax. The minister has committed to looking at an option of trying to capture some of that. I'm just wondering if he could update me on what they've done on that particular file. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister of Finance, Honourable David Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we have been looking at consultants and contractors, and assessing the Payroll Tax. The problem they're running into is that they will just end up charging it back to their clients, whether it's the government or private industry, in the form of higher billings or higher recoveries. We're still looking at that.

So ultimately, the burden of the tax will not fall on the intended target, the contractor, or the consultant, but instead, fall on the clients employing them, again, as I said, either government or the private industry that are hiring these consultants and contractors.

So they're still looking at the issue and they're still dealing with it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your first supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the department's way of looking at it, have they looked at or tried to determine the amount of money that has been paid out to contract employees? Have they looked at trying to determine what that amount is to see how much we're missing out on? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I have not seen that actual number. In part, I may have looked at it, but I personally have not seen that number yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Your second supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister commit to; if that idea has been looked at in trying to determine how much out there is escaping us on the Payroll Tax; if it has been looked at, and if not, would he commit to looking into it to try and get a grasp on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I will check with the department on that after. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Your final supplementary, Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe the Department of Human Resources keeps track of how many contract employees are out there; whether they're on contract.



Would the minister commit to contacting the Department of Human Resources and see if they keep track of that information, and if not, look at other ways to ensure that that information is adequately gathered? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Simailak.

**Hon. David Simailak:** Yes, that is a very good suggestion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Minister. Item 7. 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. Mr. Arvaluk.

### **Item 13: Tabling of Documents**

#### **Tabled Document 135 – 2(4): Correspondence to Minister of Community and Government Services Concerning Pond Inlet Community Hall & Arena**

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table my correspondence of October 31, 2007 to the Minister of Community and Government Services concerning the Pond Inlet Community Hall and Arena. Thank you, (interpretation) Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. (interpretation) Could the member please bring the Tabled Document to the Clerk's table?

(interpretation ends) Thank you. Tabling of Documents. Item 14. Notices of Motions. Item 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 16. Motions. Item 17. First Reading of Bills. Item 18. Second Reading of Bills. Item 19. Consideration of Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bill 16 with Mr. Evyagotailak in the Chair.

We'll take a short break and come back at 3:30.

(interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 14:58 and Committee resumed at 15:38*

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

**Chairman** (Mr. Evyagotailak): I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following item to deal with: Bill 16. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Kattuk.

**Mr. Kattuk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to continue with Bill 16 and the review of the Capital Estimates for Nunavut Housing Corporation, followed by the Departments of Justice and Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Are we in agreement we continue with the Capital Estimates for Nunavut Housing Corporation? Does this committee agree?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Bill 16 – Appropriation (Capital) Act, 2008-2009 – Consideration in Committee – Nunavut Housing Corporation**

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Akesuk, do you have witnesses you would like to bring to the table?

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk:** Yes, please, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Does this committee agree to bring in the witnesses?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the minister's officials in.

Thank you. (interpretation ends) For the record, minister, please introduce your witnesses.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my immediate right is the President of the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Peter Scott, and to my immediate left is Eric Whitworth, Chief Financial Officer. (interpretation) Thank you.

**Chairman:** Mr. Scott and Mr. Whitworth, welcome to this committee meeting.

Yesterday we were on L-6. Grants and Contributions. Headquarters Region. Total Headquarters Region. \$9,075,000. Does this committee agree?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you very much. L-6, L-7, and L-8. Qikiqtaaluk Region. Mr. Arvaluk.

**Mr. Arvaluk:** L-8, Qikiqtaaluk Region. (interpretation) I'm a little concerned about the plans. I'm not sure when they started preparing these plans but I'm concerned about the houses that did not make it up to the Baffin region and some houses going to the wrong destination.

As I stated yesterday, the housing association asked to do a review and they were paid for by the housing association, not the Housing Corporation. The co-op had been contracted to build the houses and since they were asked to do a review, they did but the first sea can that had arrived and when opened, there were houses that were supposed to go to Igloolik and Clyde River. They were in the same sea can.

At that time, and even in the Kivalliq region, everywhere else other than Kitikmeot, there were materials going to the wrong destination, even though they were prepared for as early as spring. You were preparing the \$6 million budget, and you stated there was a \$6 million in cost savings. Why is it that the materials were not able to make it without consideration that now you have to fly them in? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Members, I would like to inform the members, for the last two days, similar questions have been asked by other members and the minister has provided answers. So I will leave it up to the minister if he wishes to respond to your questions. Thank you. Minister Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. In regard to putting the materials to the sea cans, our staff was down I think it was in July when they were starting to do the crating and marshalling and so on. Only when they arrived in the communities did we realize that some of the materials had gone to the wrong destination. Thank you.

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

**Some Member:** I believe I have a Point of Order.

**Chairman:** What's the Point of Order?

### Point of Order

**Mr. Curley:** My Point of Order is that my question is that there were various marshalling issues and so on, which, I believe, that you alluded to questions that were posted to the minister really had to do with my constituents, and therefore, did not reflect on other Members of the House. Certainly, they have their privilege to ask questions that relate to their constituencies because the particular units have been built in a number of communities.

Such type of question that you referred to the minister really had to do with my concern with the mode of transportation that my region faces, as well as some products that are in Montreal instead of Kivalliq.

So I believe I did not at all satisfy all the other members who may or may have not asked questions. So that's just my point, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Yesterday there were a lot of similar questions from different members. They were very similar and the minister has been answering very similar answers to the questions. The minister chose to answer your questions, so it's okay. Thank you. Mr. Arvaluk.

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I appreciate those comments, however, I still fail to understand how, when you were in

front of the standing committee, you did not inform, when you found out in July, that you might have to alter your capital budget accordingly.

Because you did not identify how you would be transferring materials from Pond Inlet, not from Montreal but from Pond Inlet, to Igloodik and Clyde River, as an example, have you budgeted for that as part of your capital plan? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We contracted the marshallist to perform certain services and it was our expectation that they would comply with the terms and conditions. And, that's what we expected.

Once the sea cans were arriving to the communities, we had noticed that there were some materials that were not supposed to go to certain communities and ended up in the wrong communities. So that happened.

So since then, we've been trying to figure out what went where and why it ended up there. And, like I said yesterday in my response to Mr. Curley's questions, once we complete the research that we have to do to figure out what went where, we'll let the MLAs know of what the problems were from there on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that the issue is quite wide about what was distributed. The problem is you have not made alternate adjustments in your capital, or at least request to this House to finance the housing association to do your inventory in Pond Inlet, for example, and the respective communities, for your research work to find out how much of a mess there is. How much is it going to cost?

There are no adjustments in these capital estimates. Are you going to have the housing association pay for your inventory work, at their own cost, when, in fact, the housing association was not involved in the marshalling or the mistakes in it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation):** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will respond to that again. We have been working on this issue and the costs are not included in the capital estimates.

The marshalling portion is going to use the \$200 million to correct the mistakes. Since there's cost savings involved, we will use those dollars to rectify the problem. We are going to be working with the local housing organizations and if they had used any funds from their own budget, then they can inform our staff so that the necessary adjustments will be made.

I can't respond any other way because I've already made my statements. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the minister tell me about the \$200 million that will be used to correct the problem? Has there been an agreement with the housing associations and to the contracting people, for example, Pond Inlet Co-ops? They are going to be just using their own budget and their local companies.

Has there been an agreement between the Housing Corporation, the contracting services, and the housing associations to refund the money that they had used? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. We will be reimbursing those companies and contracted organizations. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I was trying to say, I don't think we're going to be going anywhere with this issue. It's a problem.

Now, the local housing associations are working extremely hard. They are building two five-plexes in our community and they are utilizing their own staff who should be maintaining the other houses. They have to find out which materials belong where or what belongs to them. So we have all those problems that we're encountering.

I am going to keep an eye on whether these local housing associations are using their own budgets. Not just by phone, but have you written any letters indicating that you will be reimbursing them if they had utilized their own funds? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. We had talked to them but not by correspondence. If you give us direction, we will write them a letter and we will want to find out exactly how much they had spent in substantiations to reimburse them. We will look into all that. Once we get the documentation and the substantiation, then we would reimburse them. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Akesuk. Qikiqtaaluk Region. Total Qikiqtaaluk Region. \$5,149,000. Does this committee agree?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Kivalliq Region. L-8 and L-9. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) The minister cannot respond because he already responded. I just want to tell the minister that the remarks that I made a couple of days ago (interpretation ends) that when we're talking about projections, it is not a cost saving. I just want to be very clear.

The minister said he's going to be saving \$6 million but projections are not cost savings. They have not been verified. I want to caution the minister that it's dangerous to present figures when, I said couple of days ago, it could be misleading, unless verified or audited by financial consultants or something to that effect.

So I would caution the minister when using these figures because - I concur with the minister that he's saving costs to date - he hasn't built one house yet nor completed any. The materials are sitting all over the place, and therefore, he has not paid anybody. So even if you're saving some money on this financial quarter, when the last quarter eventually begins, that will be the figure that we will want to see; the last financial quarter.

I have a question on the Kivalliq program. You budgeted \$550,000 for the homeowner program. Could the minister or his officials explain to the committee exactly how many actual projected numbers of units are planned for this kind of figure and on what type of housing initiatives? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akasuk** (interpretation): Thank you. At this time, according to our written material, we've been dealing with the applications. There are 83 applicants from the Kivalliq region in this line item. There are 83 applications but they do not state the amount, but this is for homeowner programs. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. I appreciate the minister providing some figures. I understand there are 83 applications, or 83 actual individuals approved for financing homes. My question was to try and get the minister to maybe break down some of the projected homeowner programs because the item on L-9 indicates homeowner programs.

So I'm trying to translate it down to the detail exactly which ones are retrofit kind of homes for private homeowners and which are actually new housing units. So if the minister has information on that, could he explain that to us, please? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akasuk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have 83 people on the waiting list, and once this budget goes through, we'll have an idea of how many applicants will be receiving money to improve their homes.

I believe Mr. Scott could elaborate a bit more on that. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Go ahead, Mr. Scott.

**Mr. Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The projection of how many applicants we will get under which program is based on historical information; it's based on last year's delivery for the various programs.

There were 114 applications approved in the Kivalliq, including 12 applications for down payment assistance. There were also an additional seven pending approvals at various stages of processing. There were three Material Assistance Programs that were delivered; 26 Home Repair Programs; 15 under Emergency Repair; three under Senior Citizens Home Repair Program; and there were 65 elders or disabled that were assisted under the Preventative Maintenance Program.

So based on that historical delivery, that's what the allocation to the Kivalliq is based on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that answer. Can the minister or his officials also explain whether or not they have a cap, like an absolute number that says you will release and build the number of units?

It may increase from time to time, but do you have a certain minimum number that you need, for instance, for new homeowners for that effect, because we don't have the actual breakdown of amounts. It may not be documented but the one that I have only says \$550,000 for various homeowners. I suppose that includes all the other types of money.

So can the minister help us out in whether or not they use that funding to actually get to build new homes for that amount, and if so, how many is normally budgeted for that? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. For the Material Assistance Program, we use the funding from the Housing Trust. Perhaps, this \$500,000 is for improvement and retrofit. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I think the minister normally has provided us with some information on a number of homeowners that were actually provided with some assistance at the end of the fiscal year. Will the minister do that? Can

that information also contain the number of applications that were not approved based on each particular program? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can provide a copy of the information that we have for 2007-08. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** I appreciate that. I think it's important to have that because we normally get the information from our constituents mainly from those who have not been approved. Normally, those individuals that have had a successful past don't bother giving any compliments to the Housing Corporation.

So therefore, those individuals that have been denied, we're getting quite a lot of them. Sometimes we try to pass that information back to the officials in the region, but would it be possible, minister, you indicated, that you provide that information to us?

My last one is: do you have a sort of budgeted figure for each community, or do you just base it on a number of applications coming in? Does this funding allocated for these various homeowner programs based on first come first serve kind of basis?

If one particular community did not submit any applications, they don't get any? Only ones that are close to the Housing Corporation officials probably normally have easier access to the information. How does it work, minister? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The funding we make available to the applicants is handled by the district offices. They deal with the people who have priority to be assisted, and sometimes they're done on a first come first serve basis for maintenance and retrofit. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have another question that has to do with the application process.

Once an individual has submitted an application, whether it is for Homeowner Repair Program, not an emergency one but trying to get assistance for materials and so on to upgrade their homes, if the person's application does not qualify or is not accepted, what criteria is normally used to reject that application? Thank you.

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



**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll get Mr. Scott to answer that question. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Generally, it depends upon the program that the applicant has applied for. In most cases, rejections are issued as a result of the applicant being over the income threshold limits that are applicable to that community. That seems to be the most dominant reason.

Other reasons include if they have rental arrears with the housing association, they could be rejected for a program particularly if they want to get into the Material Assistance Program or Downpayment Assistance. If they have poor credit and are unable to get a bank loan or mortgage, then they could be rejected for that reason as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. I appreciate that information. When the homeowner applicant says to a particular individual like me, for instance, he said that, "I've been denied a number of applications every year for the last three years. I applied for particular assistance but I have never succeeded." What should we do in this regard? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll get Mr. Scott to answer that. Thank you.

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

**Ms. Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My recommendation, I guess if a client, or an applicant, or a constituent comes to an MLA and tells them that, my recommendation is to suggest that they go back to the district office and talk to the program people to get advice or counselling on what they're required to do in order to become qualified.

Several of the complaints that I've personally looked into where people have complained that they're rejected year, after year, after year, I found out that they applied five years ago and because nobody has shown up on the door with an acceptance letter, they're assuming that they are rejected every year. They have to go in and keep re-applying or updating their applications and working with the district staff on an annual basis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Yes. I appreciate that. I think if all else that doesn't work in that regard, then it may be fine. We've seen many applicants that have not been approved. Is there an

appeal process for these individuals who have been denied funding applications, in particular those that have not been consistently approved every year that they apply for various types of programs? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. Those people who have been denied can then appeal to the President of the Housing Corporation. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Curley:** I understand that they could re-submit their application. Is there an appeal process with the application process for any individual that have not seen anything? Are there various appeal processes? What criteria are used to consider a person's application is being appealed and when that appeal is being made, to whom it is addressed? Because I would assume it's not going to the same program officer. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The applicants who are refused can usually go through the applications and try to work with the appropriate people who work at the district office, and they review the application. We do not have an appeals board, so they are given to the president. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that there is no actual policy or an appeal program when they have been rejected by the program officer, or those individuals that are not qualified when they feel they have. Why is there no actual appeal process for funding? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk:** I'll get Mr. Scott to respond to that question.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Scott, go ahead.

**Mr. Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Up to now, there hasn't been a real requirement to have a formal appeal process for applicants. Any applicant who feels that they are not being assessed properly, under the terms and conditions and the requirements and guidelines of the program, can send me an e-mail, write me a letter, or give me a phone call.

To date, that appeal process seems to have worked but we could look at a more formal approach if that is the wish of the House. We could develop that and see if that works any better. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The funding applications available before the program actually kicks in, and as well, before the construction season begins, is really normally quite short.

I noticed that it only takes about two weeks as of April 1 to see all of the funding and applicants considered and rejected. So in that regard, the individuals, once they have provided the approval process to evaluate applications, once they do that, then they're off on their holidays. So there's normally not very much of a window to carry out the appeal in that regard.

Having said that, I think it's really quite important that the minister should consider - I use the word "consider" now because we want to give you an opportunity to consult with your officials - and really, you, as a minister, should evaluate that program to see whether or not the applicants feel that they had qualified and get rejected every year should have an opportunity to have a clear understanding that their applications are not just thrown in the garbage can. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, we will definitely look into this because it would be more appropriate. We do want to produce a better group mandate to benefit all Nunavummiut. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Thanks again, Mr. Curley. Kivalliq Region. Total Kivalliq Region. Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just on the Homeownership Program that my colleague was asking me about, I'm just wondering, the minister or Mr. Scott had indicated that the majority of people that don't get approved is because of the income threshold. I'm just wondering, has the corporation done anything recently to look at it? Has that changed recently and have any improvements been made to that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't include the isolation settlement allowances and the northern allowance when determining the income threshold of applicants applying for retrofit funding. So we do not include those as income. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to ask the minister if the family size or number of dependents is one of the considerations taken into account, too, in determining that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, we also take into consideration the dependents and the family size. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On some of the different programs that are there for capital programs for the Housing Corporation, I think we all know that all across Nunavut, it's a unique environment and there are always unique circumstances as a result of that. So I'm just wondering if, through any of their programs, they take special consideration for specific or unique situations that may arise. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. I will let Mr. Scott respond to that. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Scott, go ahead.

**Mr. Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. During the course of the day, we run across unique situations on a daily basis. We take those into consideration on our day-to-day operations.

If the member has any specific examples he wanted to share with us, we could discuss them, or we could discuss them outside of the House. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Scott. Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can certainly empathize with Mr. Scott. I'm sure that they do run into many different and unique circumstances in their day-to-day operations.

The one thing, if you want an example, I can give one. Here in Iqaluit, for example, on the Road to Nowhere subdivision, where houses have been built up there, and there is a tremendous snow problem up there that is causing damage to people's houses, and in some cases, expensive work needs to be done to alleviate or get rid of that problem.

I'm just wondering if that could be a particular unique circumstance that they would look at addressing. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. We will definitely have to check into this further. (interpretation ends) I do believe it would have to be on a case-by-case basis for coming up with ideas. If we could assist in any way, again, it's limited to where we can assist on those types of problems. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Tootoo, we're on page L-8. Kivalliq Region. Go ahead.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know where we're at.

>>*Laughter*

I didn't get enough candy yesterday to be on a sugar buzz to forget. Yes, maybe later on tonight.

Mr. Chairman, I was just wondering if the minister would agree then, that if, not only in the specific example that I mentioned, but there may be other areas like if individuals had concerns on the capital program, the Housing Corporation's not fitting unique circumstances, that they would be receptive to sitting down with those individuals, wherever they may be from, and looking at different options. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister Akesuk.

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, we would be able to sit down with them to try to assist them if they have special circumstances or conditions and go through what programs we might have available. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Kivalliq Region. Total Kivalliq Region. \$2,811,000. Mr. Arvaluk.

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just one quick question, just one question, hopefully.

When you started the housing ownership program, the cost, I think you were spending something like \$140,000 per unit. I believe that price has gone up quite considerably. In fact, actually, it's up to around \$300,000 now. Has this housing assistance program reflected that when it comes to income threshold, for example by percentage similar to that, otherwise, it would not really reflect what's affordable today than yesterday? (interpretation) Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll get Mr. Scott to respond to that.

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

**Mr. Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the Material Assistance Program was developed, we estimated that the cost of the material package delivered to the communities, as an average, would be about \$150,000 per client. The cost of those materials in the first year we delivered came in at a lot higher than we expected at around \$180,000 to \$185,000.

The expectations on the client side of it is that they must be able to afford the cost of building the unit, the labour costs, and be able to engage a contractor to pay for the labour. Those labour costs that some of our clients have incurred has been anywhere around \$90,000 to \$130,000 per unit. Sometimes, within the same community, one client gets a quote for \$90,000 and another client gets a quote for \$130,000. So it varies.

As far as changing and altering the income limits, as a result of that, because of the inconsistencies within the labour costs of clients, we haven't done that yet. However, the minister did indicate, we have removed the northern allowance type of income from their total allowable income or assessable income for eligibility. So that will make a difference in allowing more clients to be eligible for the program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Scott. Mr. Arvaluk.

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the answer is no, it hasn't been done, except for those couple of bottom adjustments. Didn't you already know that a more successful Housing Strategy was the Sweat Equity Program? Homeowners built their own homes and it was very successful. They were built with pride and they did their own labour.

I hear that the access housing has not been as successful. Have you considered revising your policy to reflect the reality of Nunavummiut? (interpretation) Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are looking into correcting the issues that we face with homeownership and retrofits, and how we could better assist the people for homeownership assistance for repairs and additions. So we're looking into that. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The minister just created another question for me because he, or whoever the minister was, has been saying that now for almost seven or at least five years. Can he tell me, then, approximately when they will be coming up with a strategy that reflects the Nunavummiut reality? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. We are trying to look into getting more funding for the MAP program and we have been working on it since this year.

Over the two years, we have been trying to rectify the problem so that it could be more accessible by the people. Perhaps, it will be better organized and a better program itself for the people to access it from this day forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Kivalliq Region. Total Kivalliq Region. \$2,811,000. Does this committee agree?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you very much. Kitikmeot Region. Total Kitikmeot Region. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the minister and his officials again today. On page L-10, under the homeowner programs, I had a couple questions concerning the Nunavut Down Payment Assistance Program, NDAP.

In Cambridge Bay, we have what we would define as an emerging market. We do have a bit of a market there but compared to a real estate market, it's not as active. A typical real estate market is active 12 months of the year. In Cambridge Bay, houses come onto market sometimes in April, sometimes in June, sometimes in November, and sometimes in January.

So if an individual is applying to NDAP to apply for \$30,000 for a used house, or \$50,000 for a new house, if they applied earlier in the year, there's a good chance they would get approved, assuming everything falls in place and they have their bank financing. But if they apply in November, December, or January, there's less of a chance that there will be funding available.

What do you do in those situations when there's a house or two on the market that people are after and you have good candidates for this program but you don't have the funding? Can you move funding around between the regions, or do you have a source somewhere that you can access for them? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, if the funding goes ahead, it would be more open to the people accessing NDAP and we could also assist people who are trying to buy a house through that program. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that answer. I don't think I quite understood the minister.

If I was applying for that program in December after I saw a house on the market and the price is reasonable, I had been to the bank and I was eligible for a pre-approved mortgage, and then I go to the housing and find out that there's no funding left while the opportunity is there, do I have to wait until April and lose that opportunity, or is there a way that I can access some funding from the Housing Corporation through the NDAP program to purchase that house? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, once these are approved for funding by the bank, we would look for funding to assist you so that you would go ahead and purchase the house through that program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that information. That's exactly the situation that happened last year. I believe some of the clients in Cambridge Bay were saying that they were being told that there were no funds and that they couldn't purchase the houses.

So what happened is the other people with deeper pockets bought the houses and the people that required the help from the NDAP program remain in the housing that they had last year. So the opportunity was lost. Had they been able to access the funds, there's a very good chance they would have been able to purchase those houses. So that's what I'm concerned about.

I think a government program like this shouldn't be something that's on a first come first serve basis. We're trying to encourage people to get into private housing and free up social and public housing. This is a perfect program to help them do that.

So if you have clients in whatever region, whether it's Kitikmeot or other regions, there's an opportunity there in November, December, or January, maybe even February. So I think we should do everything we can to help them access that funding.

I wonder if the minister could give me some sort of assurance that I could take back to my constituents that if opportunities arise and they apply to housing, assuming everything else works – they have the proper income threshold, the bank is willing to help them out and there's an opportunity there - can they access funding through the Housing Corporation, through the NDAP program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, the staff are able to assist the people once they go through the bank to get a down payment. Our staff and our officials are working with them concerning the purchasing of the house they want. Thank you.



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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that answer. I'll be keeping an eye on the situation. People usually come to me with concerns in this area and plus, I know a little bit about financing and real estate, so I can give them advice that way. I'm not a real estate guy but they appreciate the advice I give them when they're buying houses. I might have to get a business licence then.

When you put out construction contracts in communities, usually there are, in most communities, two to five contractors who will bid on contracts. Every once in a while you have a contractor who puts in a very low bid.

I'll use an example. There would be a contract that you budgeted \$200,000 for it and the various contractors have put their bids in. They would be in the range of \$185,000 to \$210,000 but you'll have that one contractor that puts a bid in for \$100,000.

Obviously, if you could do it for \$100,000, you can save the Housing Corporation a lot of money, but perhaps, they can't do it for \$100,000. When you get bids like that, if your district office gets bids like that, how do they treat a bid like that? Do they award it because it's the lowest bid, or do they talk to the contractor to see if he can do it, or do they basically outright reject it? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akasuk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll get Mr. Scott to respond to that question.

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

**Mr. Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Whenever we do a tender and we feel that a contractor has low-balled on the price, we always go back, if we are able to go back, to the contractor and give them the opportunity to withdraw their bid on that without penalty.

If they feel that they are confident that they can do the project for that amount of money after we have advised them that we are concerned, then because it's a public tender process, we don't have any choice but to award it to the low bidder. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister Mr. Scott for that answer. So in a situation where that occurs and you do award a contract, there's normally a specified time when the contract has to be completed.

If the contractor hasn't started a contract within a suitable period of time, after awarding the contract, in fact, if there's a six-month contract and they don't start until the fourth or fifth month, obviously, they're not going to get the contract completed by the end of the six months.

What do you do in those types of situations where it's apparent that the contractor can't deliver on the terms of the contract? Should you yank the contract, or do you grant them an extension? If you grant them an extension, why would you grant them an extension, obviously, if they didn't comply with the terms of the contract? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In dealing with contractors, such as Mr. Peterson has described, it's almost like a series of progressive discipline that we go through and warnings provided to the contractor to the point where if the corporation feels that the contractor cannot comply with the terms of conditions, then they will cancel the contract. We have to allow our contractors at least some grace period, but if it's apparent that the project is not going to get done, or is in jeopardy, then we will cancel that contract.

There was another part to Mr. Peterson's question, but I've lost it. So we'll let him ask one more. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think they did answer the question but he did raise some more questions. I hope he'll let me ask a couple more.

In the smaller communities, housing is a serious issue, the lack of the housing, so we absolutely must have the contractors completing the contracts on time and on schedule, and, hopefully, on budget.

So if you have a contractor who is consistently under-bidding the market and consistently starting contracts late, so you give them extensions, at some point there, shouldn't you have identified that this contractor is not going to deliver on the terms of the contracts?

You said you would grant them an extension and give some leeway, but at some point, if he doesn't comply, then you yank the contract. Are there any penalties associated with yanking the contract; any financial penalties? Can you take them off the bidding list for the following construction year? What do you do? Do you allow the contractor to bid again?

I have like four questions in there, so I hope you followed them all. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. I will have Mr. Scott respond to your question. (interpretation ends) He's on a roll, too. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Scott:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think part of the previous question was under what conditions or why would we grant an extension.

Usually, the contractors blame the corporation but we don't usually buy that argument. Sometimes there are circumstances that are beyond the contractors' control, whereby we would consider extensions to the contract, but if it's a result of the contractor not performing their duties, then, obviously, they are subject to potential cancellation.

Most of the contract, depending on the size of a contract though, would also carry either a bid bond, often it's a cash bond, and that we can withhold, and hold that as a penalty against the contractor.

In the course of events throughout the contract, we do withhold 10 percent from draws from the contractor, which we could hold back, and if they don't complete the contract, then we don't release those to the contractor.

In larger contracts, there are performance bonds, and if a contractor does not perform, then we can call on the bonding company to make up for any losses or additional costs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister and Mr. Scott for the answers.

I'm wondering if the minister could tell me if he or the officials in his department are at all concerned that by dealing with a low balling contractor in a community and granting them extensions and leeways, and sort of insignificant penalties, that it would undermine the entire construction contractor industry within the communities so that other contractors stop bidding on Housing Corporation contracts. Are you concerned about that all? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you. Because we rarely see these types of incidences, we would have to do a thorough review and see where we can correct the problem. We rarely ever see any incidences and because of that, we will have to look at the contracting system and see where we can make improvements. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister. Mr. Peterson. Kitikmeot Region. Total Kitikmeot Region. \$2,090,000. Does this committee agree?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Total Grants and Contributions. \$19,125,000. Does this committee agree?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you very much. Back to page L-4. Nunavut Housing Corporation. Department Summary. Detail of Expenditure. Total Capital Expenditure. \$19,125,000. Does this committee agree?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Are you agreed Nunavut Housing Corporation is concluded?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Akesuk, do you have closing comments?

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank the members for their interest in the Nunavut Housing Corporation. I'm sure that there will be some challenges in our department sometimes but we will make sure that we do the best we can.

I would like to thank the members for their excellent questions and I'm sure that I didn't respond to all of your questions but we are looking at building 725 houses. They will go ahead and we will make sure that we use our capital in the most effective way. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would also like to thank my staff and the interpreters. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, very much, minister and your staff. I would now like to ask the Minister of the Department of Justice to make his opening comments.

### **Bill 16 – Appropriation (Capital) Act, 2008-2009 – Consideration in Committee – Justice**

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, very much, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to appear before the committee to present the Department of Justice's 2008-09 Capital Budget.

We all know that the Baffin Correctional Centre is overcrowded. To address this we propose the construction of a new facility in Rankin Inlet and implementation of the *Family Abuse Intervention Act*, or FAIA.

In the long term the Act will reduce the number for incarcerations by addressing behaviours in the community proactively. The planned 36-bed healing facility in Rankin will primarily house residents from surrounding communities. Inmates in remand who have access to their family and community support have greater success for healing and reintegration.

In addition, Rankin Inlet offers many existing resources for our corrections team in rehabilitating offenders including elders, addictions and spousal abuse counselling services. The community also has the policing and medical resources required to provide support to a correctional facility of this size. Community consultations with seven stakeholder groups were conducted in Rankin Inlet in February.

As you are well aware, the department is also continuing its efforts towards the construction of a small facility for female inmates in Iqaluit. We hope to develop that facility in 2008 with the carryover of the 2007-08 capital budget.

I look forward to the continuous support of my fellow MLAs as we move these projects forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Okalik. Do you have witnesses you would like to bring to the table?

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Yes. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Does this committee agree to bring the witnesses in? Mr. Arvaluk.

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) Before we start, I would like to take a brief five or ten-minute break before we proceed with Justice.

**Chairman:** Okay, we will break for ten minutes.

>>*Committee recessed at 16:48 and resumed at 17:01*

**Chairman:** Thanks for coming back to the Committee of the Whole. Does the Chair of the Standing Committee *Ajauqtiit* have comments? Mr. Arvaluk.

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) I will have to apologize. I don't know whether it would be correct for me to read the opening comments without the minister here.

**Chairman:** Yes, Mr. Arvaluk, that's okay. Go ahead, sorry. Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since the minister is not here listening to the opening comments of the standing committee, I would like to move to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. We have a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion. All those opposed. The motion is carried. I will now report progress to the Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Going back to the Orders of the Day. 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 16 and the Capital 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** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Evyagotailak. There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Tapardjuk. All those in favour of the motion, please raise your hand. Opposed. The motion is carried.

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 of a meeting tomorrow morning at ten o'clock of the Management and Services Board in the Tuktu Boardroom, and at eleven o'clock a meeting of the Regular Caucus in the Nanuq Boardroom.

Orders of the Day for November 1:

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
19. Consideration for Committee of the Whole and Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 16
20. Report to Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. (interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms... (interpretation ends) I'm sorry. I'm ahead of myself.

>>*Laughter*

(interpretation) This House stands adjourned until tomorrow, November 1, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 17:07*

