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Iqaluit

Speaker: The Honourable Peter Kilabuk, M.L.A.

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

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(Nattilik)

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(Rankin Inlet South – Whale Cove)

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Hon. Louis Tapardjuk

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Thursday, February 21, 2008

Members Present:

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

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Peter Kilabuk)(interpretation): Good afternoon, Members. I would like to ask Mr. Evyagotailak to say the opening prayer. Mr. Evyagotailak.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Evyagotailak. Good afternoon, Members. Going to the Orders of the Day. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Energy and Education, Minister Picco.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 127 – 2(4): Local State of Emergency in Rankin Inlet

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to inform the House on the issue with power in Rankin Inlet. Rankin Inlet's power plant has four engines; two larger engines - one which carries the main load and one for backup; we also have two smaller engines to even out the load, and ultimately, to support the town in case there's a failure.

Three days ago, Mr. Speaker, one of the larger engines failed. The parts required to secure that engine were ordered and will be available only next week. Two days ago, the second large engine failed. The hamlet has been running on the two small engines, which meant that the plant could not carry the load at peak time, and thus, there were power shortages.

At that time, the QEC mechanics from Rankin Inlet were in Whale Cove making some necessary repairs; a pair of mechanics from Toromont, which is the engine's manufacturer, were also secured in Winnipeg and they landed in Rankin Inlet that day to repair the large engine; QEC senior operations staff members, as well as technical support from Iqaluit, are currently in Rankin Inlet.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday afternoon, one of the smaller engines had a small fire and the fire was put out quickly, however, it damaged the engine. At that point, we did not have the electrical capacity available for the community even in the off-peak hours. A plane was

chartered to Whale Cove to bring back the QEC mechanics to Rankin Inlet and all businesses and organizations where backup generators were at to start using them in order to minimize electrical demand in the hamlet.

At that point, Mr. Speaker, the President of QEC spoke with Mayor Lorne Kusugak and advised him of the situation. The mayor immediately went through the community radio and advised the people of Rankin Inlet of the situation and explained that there would be rotating and very restricted power. Residents were asked to heat their homes while they had power. Meanwhile, the minister's office was updated on the situation, as were MLAs of Rankin Inlet, Minister Brown and Mr. Curley. The QEC Board, who is also here now in Iqaluit for a board meeting, was also briefed.

Simultaneously, Mr. Speaker, the QEC staff were working to locate backup generators to fly into Rankin Inlet. Peter Mackie, the Director of Operations, flew into Rankin Inlet last night in order to prepare for the arrival and installation of three of these generators. At 20:00 last night, Mr. Speaker, Minister Brown and her Emergency Services staff, the Emergency Measures Organization, EMO, along with Mr. Curley, as well as senior staff from QEC and I met for a briefing here at the Legislative Assembly. By this time, Rankin Inlet had declared a local state of emergency. The mayor and CGS staff in the community were running through the emergency plan.

Mr. Speaker, this morning at six o'clock Eastern Time, a backup generator owned by Nuna Logistics was pulled back from a rock crushing site about one kilometre from Rankin Inlet. And, as that was being secured, First Air with their Herc, have flown in from Yellowknife with another backup generator. The mechanics are still working to bring the second engine that failed back online.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Rankin Inlet, and indeed, all of the different groups, organizations, and businesses that have been supporting us during this very serious situation.

I can say, right now, that we're hoping, in the next couple of hours this afternoon, to have one of the other generators up and running and having the generators that we brought into town serviced and up and running in the next 24 hours, and in 72 hours, having the capacity to be able to stop the rotating blackouts that we're having now. Again, everything that can be done is being done. We are also in contact with Manitoba Hydro officials as well as NCPC in Yellowknife, in the Northwest Territories, to assist us in this situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation and Housing, Minister Netser.

Minister's Statement 128 – 2(4): Transfer of Seafreez 0B Turbot Quota to Southern Interest

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Members of this House are aware of the recent news that the federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, the Honourable Loyola Hearn, made a decision at the end of January to transfer quota for fish in our adjacent waters to commercial interests in Atlantic Canada. I want members to be aware that, as the Minister responsible for Nunavut's Fishery, this is very disappointing.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to express in this House the government's ongoing commitment to extending our access to fish quota in our adjacent waters as recently as January 29, 2008. As I reported in this House earlier this week, I wrote to the honourable minister to express my concern about this very issue.

Mr. Speaker, our position is clear: Nunavut should enjoy the same privilege as other fishing regions and this means that we should have access to 80 to 90 percent of our adjacent fisheries resources. In Area 0B, where this quota is located, on the eastern shore of Baffin Island, Nunavut holds 27 percent of the commercial turbot quota.

Some Hon. Members: Shame, shame.

Hon. Patterk Netser: If the 1,900 metric tonnes of quota is allocated to Nunavut's interests, this will increase our share to approximately 62 percent. This will lead to the creation of jobs and economic opportunities for Nunavummiut, especially in communities along the east coast of Baffin Island.

Mr. Speaker, the decision was a missed opportunity to move forward on an outstanding issue for Nunavut. This decision was made in spite of lobbying by Nunavut stakeholders and without consultation. I would like to acknowledge that Nunavut has benefited greatly when the quota allocation in Area 0A was given solely to Nunavut interests a couple of years ago. This is what we want to continue to see for Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I am committed to continuing to work and lobby on behalf of Nunavummiut on this issue and I will be bringing it up at the earliest opportunity with Minister Hearn, along with our continued interest in the implementation of the Small Craft Harbours Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Finance and CLEY, Minister Tapardjuk.

Minister's Statement 129 – 2(4): International Mother Language Day

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not too sure how we will say this in Inuktitut but I'll give it a try. It is in regard to today being International Mother Language Day.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform my colleagues that today is the International Mother Language Day. This is particularly significant as the United Nations has also declared 2008 as the International Year of Languages under the slogan, 'Languages Matter.'

Mr. Speaker, our mother language, the Inuit language, is vital to who we are as people and as Nunavummiut. Its protection and enhancement is all our responsibility, including educators and community organizations. The Government of Nunavut is also committed to take actions now to ensure that our Inuit language is, and remains, at the centre of work, education, and daily life in Nunavut, while responding to the needs identified by the minority Francophone community and respecting the language rights of those who speak English.

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut can play its part on the world stage by promoting and fostering respect for linguistic and cultural diversity, and ensuring that the Inuit language takes its rightful place in all aspects of our daily lives.

During the break, I will be launching a new set of flash cards to promote the Inuit language among preschoolers – the children of Tumikuluit, Saipaaqivik and Le Petit Nanook Daycares will join us with some very special guests from Takuginai. Please join me later in celebrating this occasion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Item 3. Members' Statements. Mr. Peterson.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 297 – 2(4): Poverty in Nunavut

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to raise an issue that should be of great concern to all of us: the critical state of poverty in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, trying to measure poverty is like trying to measure health. There's no one indicator that tells us, without question, where we rate on the scale. It's no secret that these two aspects of our wellbeing are closely related.

Mr. Speaker, Statistic Canada's most recent report on spending patterns in Canada shows that the average Canadian household spent an average of \$7,140 in food in 2005. That's 10.7 percent of total household spending. Nunavut, on the other hand, reported the highest average spending on food – \$12,820, or 20 percent of the average total household budget, which is almost double what the Canadian average household spends.

Mr. Speaker, as I noted yesterday, the federal Department of Indian and Northern Affairs briefly conducted an extensive survey on the cost of food across our northern regions. That survey showed that in 2006, a northern food basket for a family of four in Cambridge Bay cost \$382, compared to \$206 in Yellowknife, or \$202 in Edmonton. Over the course of the year, a family in Cambridge Bay spends almost \$20,000 on food alone and many are unable to do so.

Mr. Speaker, it should come as no surprise that many of our northern families have difficulty being able to afford putting food on the table, not to mention the other expenses such as food, clothing, shelter and power.

Mr. Speaker, a 2006 report by the National Council of Welfare indicates that between 2004 and 2005, the number of people receiving welfare in Nunavut increased by a startling 60 percent from 8,600 to 13,800 Nunavut residents.

Mr. Speaker, these numbers tell a sad tale. However, I am confident that many of my colleagues in this House have heard even sadder tales directly from their constituents; the hardships that they suffer.

Mr. Speaker, it is becoming increasingly important to address poverty at all levels of our society. The ability to put food on the table is one basic measure but there are many more.

Mr. Speaker, I request unanimous consent to continue my statement. Thank you.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, if we take a good hard look at statistics on employment, housing, education, training, childcare, disabilities, legal aid, and care for our elders, I'm sure that the numbers would tell a similar story.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the government to consider establishing an Anti-Poverty Strategy for Nunavut with a long-term vision and clear measurable targets and timelines. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

>> *Applause*

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

Member's Statement 298 – 2(4): Polar Bear Migration Patterns

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to raise concerns from my constituency regarding the migration patterns of the polar bear population in Western Hudson Bay.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned that the traditional migration pattern of our polar bear population has been altered over the years.

One of the potential causes for this change has been identified as certain practices of tourism operators in the Churchill area.

I have heard concerns that the bears are attracted to mobile tourist camps by the smell of food. As a result, they linger in the vicinity for significant periods of time, rather than beginning their natural journey northwards.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents have observed that the appearance of bears in our region is changing. Their weight and fat content are diminishing. This is a disturbing trend.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the Department of Environment is working to complete polar bear co-management agreements with other jurisdictions.

I encourage the minister and his department to work with the Manitoba Government and the tourism industry in our region to identify ways of promoting responsible practices that do not impact on the natural behaviour and migration patterns of our polar bear population. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Members' Statements. Member for Akulliq, Mr. Mapsalak.

Member's Statement 299 – 2(4): Congratulations to Literary Prize Winners

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to applaud the Department of CLEY's 2008 *Titiraliritti* Literary Prize Winners. Mr. Sakiasee Qaunaq from Arctic Bay, who got first prize of \$5,000 for his story titled, Umiakkut Kamanaqtukuluulaursimanivimininga, Mr. Jake Ikerperiaq from Hall Beach, for his story, Unikkaarua Kamanaqtuq, and John Ivalutanar, Sr., who is a constituent of mine and won the second prize for his story titled, Tatamikasannira, which in Inuktitut means, "Scared the Life out of Me." Mr. Ivalutanar won \$3,000 for his story.

I would also like to congratulate the youth winners Eunice Panigayak from Taloyoak and Imelda Angotealuk from Coral Harbour.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support the department's literary prize. It promotes the use of Inuktitut, especially in the areas of reading and writing. Both unilingual and bilingual Nunavummiut can also participate.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Nunavummiut to write their stories in Inuktitut and submit them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Members' Statements. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Evyagotailak.

Member's Statement 300 – 2(4): Soldier from Kugluktuk Heads to Afghanistan

Mr. Evyagotailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Even though it is not quite Friday, I am wearing red today to show support for one special member of our Canadian Forces who recently left Canada to serve an eight-month mission in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, Master Corporal Tom Harvey, who is originally from Kugluktuk and went to school there, is returning to Afghanistan for a second tour of duty.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, Tom grew up in Kugluktuk and still has family there as well as in Holman Island in the NWT. Although he is currently living in Edmonton, we still think of him as one of our own. The community is extremely proud of him, although, of course, many worry about his safety.

Mr. Speaker, Tom last went to Afghanistan six years ago. Since then, he has married and has had another addition to his family, a lovely daughter. Leaving his family is a difficult sacrifice but he has accepted it as part of his duty.

Mr. Speaker, whatever one thinks of the wars in other parts of the world, it is important that we show our Canadian Forces soldiers that we support them and pray for their safe return.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in showing our support of Tom and other Canadian troops who are serving in zones of conflict across the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Evyagotailak. Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit Centre, Mr. Tootoo.

Member's Statement 301 – 2(4): Fighting Poverty in Nunavut

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to address the issue of poverty in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, the tragedy of poverty is an issue that we cannot ignore. Too many of our constituents live below the poverty line, including, in a lot of cases, the working poor and civil servants working for this government. They struggle each and every day just to put food on the table.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that a number of Nunavummiut are taking the time today to make a difference.

As you know, the Committee of the Senate of Canada has been holding hearings across the north to address the issue of poverty in the rural and remote regions of our nation. Hearings are being held today at the Navigator Inn. A number of Nunavut organizations and activists are scheduled to make presentations to the Senate Committee. I hope that their words are clearly heard, and their message is taken back and listened to in Ottawa.

I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Bill Riddell, Dave Wilman, Elisapi Davidee, Kathy Hanson, Paul Nettleton, Paul Quassa, Carol-Anne Scott, Cyrus Blanchet, Kathy Okpik, Monica Ell, Glenn Cousins, Janelle Budgell and Stephanie Williams, just to name a few.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my colleagues have made important statements in the House on the issue of the high cost of living in Nunavut.

I am very pleased that this reality is now being increasingly recognized at all levels of government.

Earlier this month, a court proceeding in the Nunavut Court of Justice resulted in an important change in the way household exemptions are calculated. The judge in the case determined that the applicants' surplus income should be calculated on the basis of Yellowknife costs plus 50 percent. This decision will make a real difference for the families and individuals involved.

In his decision, the judge cited several studies that reveal the reality of living in Nunavut.

Our households spend 84 percent more on food per week than southern households, and food costs make up over 20 percent of all expenditures for Nunavut households, compared to around 11 percent for most Canadian households.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for unanimous consent to complete my statement. Thank you.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I was worried.

Housing is 46 percent more expensive in Nunavut than the rest of Canada. Our households spend more than double the costs of southern households on home heating, utilities and electricity. Our households spend 84 percent more on basic supplies and essentials.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on, but I believe that my point is clear. We must recognize the reality of poverty in our communities, and I will continue to advocate for measures that directly and decisively help our constituents and our employees to live dignified and decent lives. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet North, Mr. Curley.

Member's Statement 302 – 2(4): State of Local Emergency in Rankin Inlet

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today in response to the Minister of Energy's Minister's Statement. As the Energy Minister was saying, Rankin Inlet has declared a local state of emergency. The mayor again has closed the schools, the government offices, and private businesses.

In regard to the generators that had failed, Mr. Speaker, for the past three days it has been extremely for the people of Rankin Inlet. After talking to the citizens and also to the local businesses, and also the public services under the Nunavut Government, the hamlet offices also closed, all of the schools are closed, but I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, that in this time of need, it seems like we're coming to an end.

I would also like to thank the people, the Minister of Energy, for his lack of sleep in trying to help the community and the Minister of Community and Government Services. I would also like to thank the people of Rankin Inlet, who listened to the advisory that was given out to the community and in trying to keep up with the advisory.

Again, the people of the department were looking for a generator and looking for charters. They called Thompson, Manitoba, and other places looking for an alternate generator.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would like to say that in this time of need, thankfully it wasn't very cold outside in Rankin Inlet. We still have to deal with other issues and I think the four generators almost failed all at once. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Uqqummiut, Mr. Arreak.

Member's Statement 303 – 2(4): Alcohol & Drug Usage Diseases in Nunavut

Mr. Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to say this properly but I would like to state a concern I have and it is also a concern of one of my colleagues.

Before we were born, people from overseas used to come to the North and bring illnesses or sicknesses that were foreign to the people here. They caused tragic deaths and altered their lives. Some of the camps became extinct because they died from diseases. We now have proper treatment and medicines for the various diseases.

But again, there is still one. There is alcohol which is also a disease and illegal drugs which is also a disease. We need help from the government to combat these substances that are abused. We would like to see wellness brought back to our communities and to diminish the diseases and the illnesses.

Again, there is another disease out there where people die from untimely deaths due to alcohol, drugs, and suicide. Those are untimely deaths that can be avoided. There are people out there who are working extremely hard to combat these diseases. We know that there is something that we can do about it.

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

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

Mr. Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my colleagues.

This is something that is extremely important to me; there are a lot of people from Nunavut who have lost relatives and family members due to these diseases. This should be a priority of this House. We need to give the support and help to people of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arreak. Members' Statements. Member for High Arctic, Mr. Barnabas.

Member's Statement 304 – 2(4): Relocated Inuit Owed Recognition & Apology

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today as we are all aware that there were people who were moved to Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay.

There was an apology from the federal government to the people who were transported from Northern Quebec to the High Arctic. We have subsequently learned, however, that this process is still ongoing.

Mr. Speaker, of those who were moved to High Arctic came not just from Northern Quebec. Some of these people have long since passed on. There were five people from Pangnirtung moved to Arctic Bay, people from Cape Dorset to Arctic Bay, and people from the Sanikiluaq area also moved to Baffin Island. Some of them have never seen their relatives before passing on. In those times, the transportation wasn't as available as it is today, and it's getting more and more expensive to fly to the communities to see relatives.

Those that have been moved to the High Arctic are still alive and are elderly have not been given any apologies whatsoever and it is affecting their descendents.

Mr. Speaker, those that have been relocated to the High Arctic have to be recognized and considered because they were moved to a totally foreign land that they weren't used to. Yes, it is good they have relatives now in this area and they're able to hunt in that environment, but I feel that the federal government has not completely dealt with the people that were relocated to the High Arctic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Member's Statement 305 – 2(4): Tranquilization of Polar Bears

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to again raise the polar bear issue. The study and tranquilizing of polar bears for research purposes, to me, is unacceptable because it is not part of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*.

Because of my knowledge, I don't need to use a helicopter to put a polar bear to sleep; I can put them to sleep very quickly by approaching them and knocking them out.

>>Applause

For that reason, I am against the use of helicopters to go after polar bears. I am also against the tranquilizing of polar bears because this is our food. They have been put on the land for Inuit to use. For that reason, I'm stating that the tranquilization of polar bears ruins the meat so much so that it's not safe to eat.

There shouldn't be any tranquilization of polar bears for the purpose of research in our communities and it would also be best for our people. As I stated that using my

knowledge, I can put them to sleep very quickly by approaching them and knocking them out. I stated that because polar bears shouldn't be tranquilized.

Mr. Speaker, what I'm trying to say is that the tranquilization of polar bears and research should be ended. The research of polar bears is depleting their population. So perhaps, if we don't use those practices, it will be just fine. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Members' Statements. Member for Nattilik, Minister Aglukkaq.

Member's Statement 306 – 2(4): New Hamlet Councillors at Gjoa Haven and Taloyoak

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to say hello to the people from Gjoa Haven and Taloyoak, especially to the elders in Gjoa Haven and Taloyoak. I would like to give a message for my mother; I tried calling you yesterday but I couldn't get a hold of you, so I'll try to call you again tonight.

Today I would like to recognize the newly elected Taloyoak and Gjoa Haven Hamlet Councils. They just elected the new members of the hamlet councils last December.

I'll start off with the new Members of the Hamlet Council of Taloyoak: Aiolah Takolik, Rebecca Aklah, Koonook Oleekatalik, and Sandra Lyall. They were just elected and the new mayor, who is well-known in Nunavut, is also a big supporter of mining companies and economic development. I am very happy to say that the new Mayor is Charlie Lyall.

Also, the new Mayor of Gjoa Haven is Uriash Puqiqnak. If you're listening, I would like to thank you for your ongoing support and I appreciate your calls. I am grateful that you are again the Mayor for Gjoa Haven. I would also like to recognize your colleagues: Allen Aglukkaq, James Qitsualik, David Siksik, Donald Angoyoak, Gideon Qitsualik, and Michael Angutitauruq. They are all returning to the hamlet council, so I'm very happy to see that and wanted to recognize them today. Thank you.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Members' Statements. Member for Amittuq, Minister Tapardjuk.

Member's Statement 307 – 2(4): Live Broadcast of Assembly Proceedings

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, when we started our House sitting, we were told that we're going to be broadcast live to the communities during our session. All of us thought that we were going to be live to the communities but some of the communities could not receive it.

I received a letter from one of my constituents that the staff wanted to watch the live session but he was not able to. They wanted to watch me yesterday when I delivered my Budget Address. That problem has been fixed, so I would like to express my thanks.

I would also like to thank my colleague for Repulse Bay mentioned that one of my constituents won an award for literacy, Jake Ikerperiaq, who was also my CA in Hall Beach, so I'm very proud of him and also encourage him to keep writing.

I also want to say hello to my relatives who are probably watching. I will be away from my wife for a while, so I wanted to send my regards to her. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Tapardjuk. Orders of the Day. Members' Statements. Going back to the Orders of the Day. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for High Arctic, Mr. Barnabas.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize Moses Oyukuluk and Terry Manik. Moses Oyukuluk has his own business and is very supportive to the community. His father-in-law also supports him and also works here. I would like to welcome them all to the Gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize a visitor from my constituency who is here in the House, Gideon Taqauqaq, also known as Amaaq, which gets confusing as we know him as Taqauqaq. He works in the nursing station and they work very hard in the community. He's the Chairman of the Committee, who is here in Iqaluit, Gideon Taqauqaq. I would like to welcome him to the Gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to recognize a visitor who is a Member of the Iqaluit City Council. I have been representing him, although he might have moved by now but I enjoyed his company during election

time because he is always welcoming, David Alexander. I would like to welcome him very much to the Gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Mr. Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am happy to recognize a visitor from Clyde River who works in Wildlife. A longstanding HTO Member and also has been a Chairman of the HTO, who also worked with the Baffin Fisheries Coalition, Manasie Audlakiak, who is sitting in the back. Welcome.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arreak. Welcome to the Gallery. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure today to introduce in the Gallery an internationally known fishing resource expert, who has worked not only on the east coast but also on the west coast, and indeed, in the arctic waters. It gives me great pleasure to welcome from the Baffin Fisheries Coalition, Mr. Jerry Ward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. I would like to welcome all visitors to the Gallery. Going to the Orders of the Day. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Tunnunig, Mr. Arvaluk.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 375 – 2(4): Status of Small Craft Harbours for Nunavut

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

As the minister is already aware, there continues to be a need for small craft harbours in Nunavut. The seven communities, especially Pond Inlet, have been identified as our greatest priorities. This is Pond Inlet's greatest priority.

Can the minister update me today on the status of his efforts to obtain federal support for the seven small craft harbour projects that have been identified as priorities for Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the member's question, we have been continually working on this very hard and I also made a Minister's Statement in this regard.

We're still waiting for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans for this \$40 million that we have requested to be used for small craft harbours in seven communities. We still have not got a response from the federal government on this. Thank you.

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

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister stated that they're still waiting for the response from the federal government, the former Minister of Economic Development and Transportation went to present before the Senate Committee to present Nunavut's case for more federal funding for small craft harbours.

Can the minister tell me today whether he has discussed this issue with his federal counterpart, and if so, what response did he receive? As he stated that he's still waiting for a response, so what is the status of it now? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have not personally spoken to them but our officials, Mr. Speaker, have been making plans if the funding for the seven communities is agreed to. We wanted to be prepared ahead of time in the event we got approved for funding. The plans are ready; we're just waiting for the federal government now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year, the GN Capital Estimates for 2008-09 include \$1 million in funding for small craft harbour contributions. This represents our 10 percent contribution towards small craft harbours. Can the minister indicate to me what plans he has for using this \$1 million that was agreed to in 2008-09 that we have allocated? If the federal government doesn't provide funding, how are you going to allocate this funding? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the member's question, this funding would be inadequate to be used for small craft harbours in the seven communities. This funding is to be used for planning purposes, as I have stated before, for small craft harbours but this funding is also used to maintain the small craft harbours that already exist in the communities. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Oral Questions. Mr. Curley.

Question 376 – 2(4): Apology to the NEU Regarding Member's Statement

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Premier.

Yesterday, it was quite embarrassing in the House. We have to be dignified here but it seems like there is no dignity in the House. All Nunavummiut and all of our employees didn't approve of the comments he was making with respect to where NEU holds their meetings, which seemed like it was a confrontational statement. That was very irrespective.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to say that the public servants within the government are working extremely hard. We are experiencing shortage of staff in some areas. So therefore, they need a good leader and they need more support.

The Nunavut Employees Union has been elected democratically. For that reason, we were not proud of the Premier when he was belittling them because Nunavut employees need a good leader. So, Mr. Premier, could you tell us that you regret what you said?

Speaker (interpretation): I'm sorry, your time ran out. Mr. Curley, are you done asking your question? Thank you. Mr. Premier.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I made that statement as an elected official. I made my Member's Statement because I do not like to see that kind of situation; it's embarrassing to see that.

They said that we do not have adequate accommodation here, so they need to go to a meeting outside of Nunavut. We lose money that way and it doesn't look good for Nunavummiut, so that's why I made that statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Although you stated that, it was clear, Mr. Speaker, and Nunavummiut were also listening, that the message they got was that they shouldn't be making decisions on where to hold meetings, but instead, hold them all in one location. It's up to them as to where they want to hold their meetings because there are no laws stating otherwise.

There should be a better partnership because there shouldn't be any fighting or disagreements within this House. So I think it would only be fair if you make an apology, and if not, why don't you want to make that apology? (interpretation ends) Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. I'm going to leave it up to the Premier because he made that statement under Members' Statements. Mr. Premier.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As a Nunavut resident, I made that Member's Statement. I am not going to apologize. I will continually try to support the Nunavummiut because that money could have been used in Baker Lake rather than going to Winnipeg, Manitoba. So I do not like to see that occur. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Curley: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) The Member for Iqaluit West, as a Premier, it's evident that that's what the message that the residents of Nunavut got from the Premier. The statement he made was inadequate and it's evident now that the other people who listened to your Member's Statement felt put down.

Although they know and we know that you're an MLA and the Premier, you cannot separate your position as a Premier and your membership in the Legislative Assembly. This Legislative Assembly has to be dignified. Perhaps, you can make a statement more on the side of supporting the NEU, and if you didn't want to support them yesterday and if you don't apologize to them, then members of the public will have a misunderstanding. (interpretation ends) Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Premier.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not even point out or mention anything to put any staff down; I was talking more on the line of the management and senior levels. I'm not going to apologize. I appreciate the staff and I'm very appreciative of the fact that they have worked very hard.

However, the union representatives seem like they don't represent Nunavummiut. So if they're going to represent Nunavummiut, they should be more supportive of Nunavummiut and spend their money in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Speaker, the Premier has no control over that funding and the majority of your funding that you have a jurisdiction over gets lost by spending it on consultants.

Yesterday, when you mentioned the Nunavut Employees Union, you should have just mentioned the president rather than the NEU, because when you mention NEU, you talked about all of the Members of the NEU. So I believe you should apologize, and if you don't want to, why don't you want to apologize? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Mr. Premier.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not going to apologize one bit and I'm not going to mention one bit of it because the union represents all of the people who work at the NEU and it seems like the NEU is using the staff. If they go to a different province, the money is going to be lost.

As I stated that if we're going to hold a meeting outside of the territory's jurisdiction, the public out there would not like to see that. If we see things like that, we should mention it. We don't want to and we should not see that money being spent outside of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Orders of the Day. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for High Arctic, Mr. Barnabas.

Question 377 – 2(4): Emergency Management Plans

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

Mr. Speaker, yesterday during Members' Statements, when I made my Member's Statement, there was a 112 mph wind in Grise Fiord at that time. Last year, the Legislative Assembly passed Bill 12, Nunavut's new *Emergency Measures Act*. This new legislation requires all municipalities to prepare an Emergency Management Plan and submit the plan to the minister.

Can the minister tell me today how her department is working with the communities of Grise Fiord, Resolute Bay, and Arctic Bay to make them aware of this requirement and assist them in preparing their Emergency Management Plans? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Minister of Community and Government Services, Minister Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, this was approved and it applies to all of the communities. If it's not already being used, then we want to treat the communities the same and they might have to make their own bylaws within their communities. They make a plan within their communities in case there is an emergency where they can congregate; the usual location is the schools.

Back to the question from my colleague, we have heard how it was in Grise Fiord when the strong winds came and we were advised that there was a lot of damage to some equipment.

The staff of CGS worked together and communicated with the community. Our staff have indicated that if they want assistance from us, they should just let us know. We have not been approached by them but we are available if they want our assistance. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier this month and yesterday, a major blizzard struck Grise Fiord, and as the minister mentioned, it caused considerable damage and disruption. At this time, they're trying to fix the communication lines with the radio. (interpretation ends) Can the minister indicate to me whether her department has been able to assist the municipality in its clean-up efforts? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Minister of Community and Government Services, Minister Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): I will respond in English. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The damages to some parts of the community's properties are known to the department. Damages to the communication systems, like the CBC satellite, and the Qiniq satellite, are being repaired by companies who are responsible for that service.

We are also aware that there were personal damages, but to date, no one has asked for assistance yet and we'll be waiting to assist them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Barnabas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A few years ago, Sanikiluaq experienced a disaster when its power plant was destroyed by fire. This week, a state of emergency has been declared in Rankin Inlet.

Can the minister indicate to me how her department is working with the Qulliq Energy Corporation to develop contingency plans to deal with the possible destruction of the power plants in Arctic Bay, Resolute Bay, and Grise Fiord? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Minister of Community and Government Services, Minister Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that question. We do have an Emergency Preparedness Plan that is being introduced to all communities and we're trying to be very effective on that.

We have an emergency measures office here in Iqaluit; they are on the lookout and are always ready whenever emergencies are reported. Also, there are federally assisted programs that are available in the event of a natural disaster. The department had notified the Government of Canada that there may be requests coming from the member's community for some assistance.

If there are natural disasters taking place in any community, I continue to encourage the communities to declare a state of local emergency. This helps governments to provide assistance during the time of need and makes it easier for follow-ups. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Member for High Arctic, your final supplementary, Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In January of this year, our minister represented Nunavut at a meeting of Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers responsible for Emergency Management. The official news release from this meeting indicates that "ministers discussed the importance of ongoing work on pandemic planning, best practices, and aboriginal emergency management." Can the minister indicate to this House today what plans she has for the coming year in these areas? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Levinia Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that question. The department, with the emergency office, they continue to send messages out to all hamlets of the procedure and ensure their emergency plans are in place.

Also, our department is working with the Health Department since pandemic was mentioned and that is for the Health Department to identify because in our department, we don't do diagnoses of illnesses, but the pandemic, I hear, could strike anywhere. I believe it touches health too, so that's why different departments have to work together – my department, Education, the Health Department, and the other departments. It's important to collaborate together because it can be a major effect when it strikes or when it happens.

The communities in Nunavut are being prepared for that, and I know in hamlets, they have their own procedure of how they respond to an emergency; for example, we have a state of emergency declared in Rankin Inlet and everybody is collaborating together to work well for that state of emergency; similar to that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Members, very briefly, I would just like to welcome you, sitting behind the Premier is from Pangnirtung, 82 year old Siloa Metuq and her daughter, Lucie Young. Please welcome them to the Assembly.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit Centre, Mr. Tootoo.

Question 378 – 2(4): Impact of Budget Measures on GN Staff Housing

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to join my colleague from Rankin Inlet in saying it was a little embarrassing yesterday listening to the comments made by the Member from Iqaluit West and his Cabinet colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Mr. Speaker, in my Members' Statement today, I noted the challenges facing our constituents in the area of affordable housing. I would like to take this opportunity to ask the Minister of Finance some questions concerning yesterday's budget speech.

In his first budget speech, the minister announced that on April 1, 2008, the government will roll back staff housing rents to January 2007 levels.

Can the minister clarify for the House today whether this is a permanent freeze on rents, or just a one-time, non taxable benefit, election year measure that will be followed by a resumption of rent increases next year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister of Finance, Minister Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regards to his question with respect to the housing rents, that they will be retroactive to January 1, 2007, we feel that this will be ongoing with this present government and it will probably be reviewed again at the next government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that response. The minister's budget speech also indicated that the GN will provide a housing allowance of \$400 a month per household to employees who own their own homes or rent accommodations on the private market, which is a taxable benefit. Can the minister indicate to the House today approximately how many households will be eligible for this benefit and what the cost will be to the government? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister of Finance, Minister Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think it would be more appropriate if it's responded to by the Minister of the Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. I didn't quite get what you said. Are you just indicating or do you want the Minister of Housing Corporation to respond? Mr. Tootoo, can you elaborate more on your question and who you're directing it to?

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was to the Minister of Finance, and surely, they had some numbers to look at when they were doing this. So I'm just wondering if he has an idea of how many households and what amount they have budgeted, or what that cost will be for implementing that policy on the government. I hope that the Minister of Finance would have that information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister of Finance, Minister Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In reviewing how much the subsidies will cost, we are relying on these following numbers: 530 government employees would be affected and we would be able to provide funding of \$2.5 million for the whole year. I believe that was his question. Those are the figures that I can provide to him at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The \$2.5 million that the minister indicated, is that in the budget that's before us right now? Also, does he have an idea of how much it's going to cost the government for the rollbacks in the rents and are both those amounts included in the budget put before the House yesterday? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister of Finance, Minister Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't have the figures in front of me, but we will be able to provide that information once we go through the budget. I cannot respond to his question at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With good news stories like that, you would think you would have all of the numbers handy.

Mr. Speaker, I guess when it comes to collective bargaining with our unions, the buck stops with the Minister of Finance, who is also the Minister of Human Resources. I'm

just wondering if he can indicate to the House today whether he consulted with the union on the staff housing measures and the benefits that were announced here in the House yesterday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister of Finance, Minister Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): We haven't had discussions and the union president was going to check into this. We are working on this and we want to have a good working relationship with them while they're negotiating an agreement with the government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 379 – 2(4): Poor Air Conditions at Sanikiluaq's Nuiyak School

Mr. Kattuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will direct my question to the Minister of Education.

Mr. Speaker, I recently tabled a motion from the Hamlet of Sanikiluaq requesting the government to address the ventilation problem at the school. There is a foul odour that has caused them to close the school down for long periods of time.

Can the minister provide an update on what has been done to date to address the air problem at Sanikiluaq's Nuiyak School? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Minister of Education, Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by apologizing to the people of Sanikiluaq for the continuing problems we've had with the school in Sanikiluaq and there have been a lot of issues there.

Very quickly, we've had a team in the community, as late as a week and a half ago, to look at the whole area around what's causing the ventilation problems. Very quickly, Mr. Speaker, what occurred was that the school is heated through the reheat program from the power plant in Sanikiluaq, there was a problem with the reheat and that meant the boilers of the school had to come on. And, when those new boilers came on, because they hadn't been operating for a long time, there were fumes that went through the school, and that was an issue for a few days.

Also, we found out, Mr. Speaker, that depending on what direction the wind was going during this period of time, exhaust from the power plant was actually going into the ventilation system of the school and that was causing issues. We also discovered, Mr. Speaker, that when the sewage truck and other vehicles were going to the school, and

indeed, they were parked underneath the ventilation area of the school, and exhaust from the trucks actually went into the school.

So we've been working along the lines of different ways of combating these issues. One was to actually look at the boiler system and get that working, clean it up and so on; two, to have the reheat system fixed; and three, to inform the hamlet of the issue around parking the trucks near the ventilation system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kattuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There have been some studies in the school and there was also a team that came up to the community from down south. However, their stories are not alike, or they're not meeting what needs to be done. So my next question is: can the minister clarify exactly what steps will be taken to fix the ventilation problem at the Nuiyak School? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Minister of Education, Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is correct; we did have some air quality experts in to test the quality of air in the school and they consulted with the DEA.

I guess the first area of concern was to fix the reheat program out at the power plant so that, indeed, you wouldn't have to use the boilers in the school. Secondary to that was to ensure that the boilers themselves were up to standard and that, indeed, they were clean so that when they did come on, there wasn't a fume problem. The third part was to make sure and let the hamlet know that when they're doing the sewage pump outs and water fill-ups and so on that the trucks are not left idling near the ventilation system so that the exhaust can get into the school.

Further, Mr. Speaker, when it warms up later on in the spring, there will be some work being carried out through the auspices of CGS, which does the maintenance on the schools, to ensure that we negate and mitigate the issue with the exhaust in the school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kattuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last question for the minister: it is very disrupting to our children's education to be sent home because of long-term problems that could and should have been dealt with as soon as possible. Can the minister confirm that the problem will be addressed at the earliest opportunity? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Minister of Education, Minister Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been working with Minister Brown's Office and I can assure the member that we have a plan in place to try to rectify those

issues that have arisen on the issue with the poor quality of air in the school of Sanikiluaq.

Some of them can be fixed locally, like I said earlier, making sure that, for example, the sewage truck and the water truck are not actually parking near the ventilation so that the exhaust is going into the school. Some of the other ones will take a longer term fix, when the weather is warmer and when we can actually dig up the lines, for example, on the reheat with the Power Corporation.

Cleaning of the boilers in the school has occurred and that will continue, again, when the weather is warmer. I want to ensure the member that I know that CGS, the department, and all staff are diligently trying to fix that problem and rectify the issues at the school in Sanikiluaq.

The good news, Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, is that there is now an announcement on a brand new school in Sanikiluaq yesterday. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 380 – 2(4): Nunavut Arctic College Campus at Cambridge Bay

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

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of Finance's budget speech stated, "We are examining our existing capital plan to determine how to best reconfigure current approved capital projects to maximize the Building Canada Fund monies. This reconfiguration could allow us flexibility to move up timelines of capital projects that are priorities to the Legislative Assembly."

Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed to note that a new Kitikmeot Nunavut Arctic College Campus was not on this list of capital projects. I have raised this issue in the House many times and in correspondence with the minister.

I would like to ask the minister if he could tell the House what his department is doing to ensure that a new Nunavut Arctic College Campus for the Kitikmeot becomes a priority for the Government of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The reconfiguration of the capital plan entailed, under the Canadian Building Infrastructure Program, was looking at projects that we could fund out of those monies and the monies that we have already identified in our budget that we would be able to shift those monies to a different capital year, and that's what we mean by reconfiguration.

For example, if there's a water sewage project budgeted at \$3 million in a given community, we would be able to take those monies that are on water and sewage and be able to convert them to other capital needs.

In this case, the member brings up the campus in Cambridge Bay and I am in agreement with him. I think everyone realizes that we have six or seven buildings on the ground in Cambridge Bay and it's the only major community in Nunavut where we actually don't have a campus. With the mining training going on, we want to put a campus in there. So that's one of our priorities. Another example is the school in Coral Harbour. We need to be able to bring that project up into the capital budget.

So over the next couple of months, Mr. Speaker, we will have an opportunity, as the Premier indicated, with the members to look at priority programs within that framework and timeframe and to be able to see what we can bring up in the capital budget of necessity for the people of Nunavut. And, that way we would be able to advance the project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that answer. I don't think I heard the minister tell me how he's making it a priority. He wasn't clear; he said we need a campus, but I wish he would come clear with how he's going to make it a priority. I think it should be a priority and I think everybody in the Kitikmeot thinks it should be a priority.

So my question for the minister: is he going to make the Kitikmeot Nunavut Arctic College Campus for the Kitikmeot region a priority for the Five-Year Capital Plan? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I have demonstrated over the last few years that we do see education as a priority in the government itself. Part of that priority is to deliver infrastructure, and as I said earlier, we are being able to deliver now new schools in Qikiqtarjuaq and move them up; move up the program in Sanikiluaq; we are trying to look at Coral Harbour, and I said to the member that that's something that we need to do but we need to sit down with all of the Members in the House.

We have been able to look at the airport, for example, as one of the major areas of concern for Cambridge Bay and bring that forward. Hopefully, we can do the same thing with the campus in Cambridge Bay. It is a priority of this ministry to be able to move that project forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that answer. Mr. Speaker, also in the budget speech yesterday, the Minister of Finance told us that mining is going to be important for Nunavut.

The Kitikmeot is a hotbed of mining; we need trained people to take advantage of the opportunities that come up from mining, including employment and career opportunities. Without a modern facility, I think a lot of those opportunities are going to be lost to southerners and I think it should be an immediate priority of this government to ensure that a new campus is constructed in the Kitikmeot.

With that in mind, I would like to ask the minister, and he's known about this for several years: can he tell me what stage the consultation plan and design is at in terms of preparing for a new campus be included in the capital planning process? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think the Premier has been very strong in demonstrating the commitment of this government to try to move forward on the vocational training programs around the mining industry. That's why we've committed and that's why we said again in the budget yesterday that the new trade school in Rankin Inlet would start in 2008. As part of that funding arrangement, the Members of the House agreed; we actually voted that money to move forward with the auxiliary campus in Cambridge Bay. We hope to be in the position to be able to deliver that Millwright Program so that training for mines, and mine jobs specifically, can occur.

Again, over the next several weeks, while we have an opportunity to review the Five-Year Capital Plan and see what monies we can move around, we'll be able to look at the projects like the Coral Harbour school and the campus in Cambridge Bay. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that answer. Mr. Speaker, yesterday in the budget speech, the Minister of Finance was using terminology like "announce that these projects will commence this year," and commit for "the much needed new and expanded airport," using all kinds of terminology that clearly indicated that certain projects were going to proceed this year and that they were priorities for the Government of Nunavut.

So with that in mind, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister: as he said that this Arctic College Campus is a priority for the Government of Nunavut, can he commit that the project will commence this year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I can say to the member is that I can commit to discussing it over the next several weeks. What has to happen, Mr. Speaker, as the member knows, and all the Members in the House know, we only just recently signed off on the agreement with the federal government.

We're able to look at several programs and projects that the members have brought up in the House, and that we see as health and education issues, we were able to bring forward, and that's what Minister Tapardjuk has announced.

The ability of the government right now is to look at, over the next several weeks, the Five-Year Capital Plan and see, as I explained, for example, on water and sewage programs, where we can use the budgeted dollars from the federal infrastructure program and shift those monies to other capital project needs of the government.

So I can make that commitment to the member that we will look at it. I can't commit to starting a project in a community when there hasn't even been a tender or a design done and so on, and it's a bit premature. What I can do is commit to working with the member and the House to be able to bring that forward in the spring session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 381 – 2(4): Western Hudson Bay Polar Bears

Mr. Alagalak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question would be for the Minister of Environment. (interpretation) It looks like he hasn't been doing much so I'll ask him some questions.

(interpretation ends) In my Member's Statement, I addressed some problems facing the Hudson Bay polar bear's population. I also noted the importance of our government raising this issue with Manitoba.

Can the minister update me today on the status of his department's efforts to work with the Government of Manitoba on the issues facing the Hudson Bay polar bear population? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you. We are continuing to work with Manitoba with respect to the status of polar bears and we would like this to continue smoothly. Perhaps, after we have had a meeting, we would also like to meet with their minister to see how we can improve the situation with the concerns of polar bears throughout the world. Thank you.

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

Mr. Alagalak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my Member's Statement, I raised concerns about some of the practices of private tourism operators in the Churchill area. Residents in my region believe that these practices are interfering with the normal migration patterns of the polar bear population. Can the minister indicate to me today whether he will raise this issue with his counterparts in Winnipeg? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be speaking with the minister to see how the issue could be improved and not to alter the polar bear migration patterns too much down in Manitoba and also in Nunavut. Thank you.

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

Mr. Alagalak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister update this House today on the status of the department's efforts to complete polar bear co-management agreements with other jurisdictions including the Manitoba Government? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) We are continuing to work with the co-management agreements with the jurisdictions of the polar bears. We are concerned and we are working with the people of Nunavut and also other jurisdictions on this issue of the polar bear. If we're going to do any research, we do work with them together. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will ask my final supplementary in Inuktitut. It is self evident about what I'm talking about and what has been seen down there is the polar bears are delayed a long time. Would the minister be

able to provide some reports of how long the polar bears are stopped due to private tour operations and tourists, and also other affects on the polar bears' migratory patterns and other causes of changes in their migratory patterns?

I'm sure these scientists have been making reports as they have probably studied those areas, so I wonder if he would be able to provide that information in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the polar bears that are being studied are in Manitoba, if they had any information, we would be requesting copies of them. Maybe we and our staff could work with the Government of Manitoba to see where they're at with their polar bear studies. We will work on this and if there was any information provided, I would pass them on to the Member of Arviat. Thank you.

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

Question 382 – 2(4): Qikiqtarjuaq Airport Terminal Building

Mr. Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

There's a news release from the federal government pertaining to the funding that they released concerning the \$242.68 million that will be directed to Nunavut and we hear that they will be using this funding as soon as possible for medical services in the North and nursing stations. This funding will be available until 2014.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote a section from the news release and I quote, "The two governments will work together to address infrastructure priorities, such as water, wastewater, green energy, regional and community airports, community and intercommunity access roads... and regional marine facilities."

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I have a number of questions pertaining to Qikiqtarjuaq's concern for the airport not being in good condition, the terminal building itself. As it has been stated that that's what they're going to do, will the airport in Qikiqtarjuaq be included as a capital project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arreak. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During my briefings, (interpretation) I was informed about the conditions of the terminal building in Qikiqtarjuaq. We will see

what we can do but it would have to be approved by Cabinet. That's all I have to say. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Arreak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's too bad that they have delayed it. She's a little further from me now; it's too bad because she was sitting next to me. Thank you, Minister. I don't want you to just think about it and plan it, but when are you going to identify the funding and when will they start the work on that terminal building in Qikiqtarjuaq? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arreak. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Five-Year Capital Plan has been set but we will have to look at it carefully - whether we can put it forward or not. The Minister of CGS is going to be responsible for the building of the terminal and we will be working together with the other departments concerning the priorities that we would like to see for the Five-Year Capital Plan. Once that is done... I'm not sure how else I can say that when I don't have the facts in front of me.

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

Question 383 – 2(4): Quantity of Petroleum Products on Sealift

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Community and Government Services as she is also responsible for the Petroleum Products Division.

I wonder if she could explain to us how they decided on the amount of fuel they're going to be purchasing for all communities in the summertime. Last summer, how did she identify the amount of fuel being delivered to Baker Lake? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Simailak. Minister of Community and Government Services and Petroleum Products Division, Minister Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't find the piece of paper that identifies which communities will be receiving how much and it is updated. What I can say to you with respect to your question is that I didn't find what he is asking for and I'm sorry.

(interpretation ends) The total volume of refined petroleum products delivered to the Nunavut communities by region were: in Kivalliq, there were 37,688,388 litres. That's for Kivalliq and I have the other regions as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to get clarification on how you plan and how you will buy the fuel and allocate it to the communities.

Mr. Speaker, last summer, we thought we were going to be short on gasoline in Baker Lake, and the diesel fuel that came in last summer, there was a rumour that the mining companies would not be able to buy the fuel from the communities brought in by the government.

For this reason, I just wanted to get a clarification from the minister. There was a Budget Address delivered yesterday, we found out how they were going to receive a windfall from mining and exploration activities. Considering this and other things, particularly in the Baker Lake area, the mining company that's in that area now was told that they are not going to be able to buy fuel and gas from the community. When it's like that, it's not very welcoming, and then they have to look somewhere else to buy their fuel.

I would like to find out from the minister why they have stated that and decided to do that. Why does it seem like we're always in short supply of fuel? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Simailak. Minister for Community and Government Services, Minister Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. PPD tries to order enough fuel for the communities for a whole year and try to find out how much they use in the community. In Nunavut, there are 25 communities and there are so many tank farms that exist as well.

We have to prepare ahead of time for the tank farms that do exist since they don't come cheap. The communities are growing in population; looking at that, if they need to go through the Five-Year Capital Plan, then we will look into that. That is what I understood earlier.

I just don't want to make any guesses but what I have been told is the communities will be the first to get the fuel for domestic use so that they don't be short at the end of the year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is important to us in Nunavut and to mining companies as well. They hire people in the communities locally and we have to plan ahead of time. Is the minister working with Economic Development and Transportation and looking at the mining companies' fuel needs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Simailak. Minister for Community and Government Services, Minister Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Question Period is now over. I'm just joking.

>> *Laughter*

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Yes, we try to work with my Cabinet colleagues and also our planning staff. We continually keep close communication with the staff because they do the planning all the time.

Starting from today, yes, we want to maintain a good, close working relationship because this issue is very huge and economic development needs to be out into the communities and I agree with you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm very pleased to hear that response. Can the minister direct her officials to see if fuel distribution could be done by the private sector instead of the government side? Can your officials do a feasibility study to see if it's cheaper to privatize fuel delivery, and once you get that information, to provide them to me? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Simailak. Minister of Community and Government Services, Minister Brown.

Hon. Levinia Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think that's a very good suggestion. I suppose there would have to be a major assessment study to that affect to see if it's feasible. It wouldn't be a bad idea to develop that, and once I have communicated to the staff of PPD and CGS, I will let the member know. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Minister. I'm sure you are aware that the time for Question Period is over now. Going to the Orders of the Day. Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Replies to Budget Address. Item 11. Petitions. Member for Akulliq, Mr. Mapsalak.

Item 11: Petitions

Petition 003 – 2(4): Repulse Bay Health Centre

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a petition from my constituents in Repulse Bay. In this petition it says:

We, the residents of Repulse Bay, petition the Government of Nunavut to begin construction on a new health centre in Repulse Bay earlier than planned.

Mr. Speaker, this petition contains 168 signatures.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I was pleased to hear the government's good news on this issue during the budget speech. I'm sure that my constituents will feel that their voices have been heard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Item 11. Petitions. Item 12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Item 13. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills. Item 14. Tabling of Documents. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Kattuk.

Item 14: Tabled Documents

Tabled Document 175 – 2(4): Support Letter for NTK on its Application for Funding Through Government of Canada Program for International Polar Year

Mr. Kattuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to table a copy of a support letter I recently wrote for the Nunavumi Tasiujarjuarmiugatiit Katimajingit, also known as the NTK.

Mr. Speaker, NTK has applied for funding from the Government of Canada for International Polar Year in advance of the proposed Hudson Bay summit that is taking place in 2009.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents in Sanikiluaq have many concerns with respect to the proposed large scale changes that are projected to occur should the James Bay Project go ahead.

NTK plans to hold a five-day summit with approximately 150 participants and presenters. Panel discussions will take place on this important issue. I strongly support this initiative. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Please be patient while they're delivering the copy to the table officers. Thank you.

Tabling of Documents. Mr. Premier.

Tabled Document 176 – 2(4): Legal Services Board of Nunavut Annual Report for 2006/2007

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to table the following document: Legal Services Board of Nunavut Annual Report for 2006/2007. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Please provide the copy to the officers.

Thank you. Item 14. Tabling of Documents. Minister of Finance and Minister of Culture, Language, Elders, and Youth, Minister Tapardjuk.

**Tabled Document 177 – 2(4): Interim Financial Report of the GN (Unaudited)
March 31, 2007**

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to table the Interim Financial Report (Unaudited) of the Government of Nunavut for the Year Ending March 31, 2007.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Minister. Please be patient while we get the copy up here.

Item 14. Tabling of Documents. Item 15. Notices of Motions. Item 16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 17. Motions. Item 18. First Reading of Bills. Item 19. Second Reading of Bills. Item 20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bill 23 with Mr. Arreak in the Chair.

At this time, before we proceed with Committee of the Whole, we'll take a 20-minute break.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>House recessed at 15:28 and Committee resumed at 15:57

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

Chairman (Mr. Arreak): Thank you for coming back. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following item to deal with: Bill 23. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Evyagotailak.

Mr. Evyagotailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We would like to commence with the review of Bill 23 and the Main Estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Evyagotailak. Are we in agreement we deal with the Main Estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services?

Some Members: Agreed.

**Bill 23 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2008-2009 –
Consideration in Committee – Health & Social Services**

Chairman: Thank you. I would now like to ask the Minister Aglukkaq of the Department of Health and Social Services to make her opening remarks. Ms. Aglukkaq.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the opportunity to present the 2008-09 Main Estimates and Business Plan for the Department of Health and Social Services to the Committee of the Whole.

My department is undertaking innovative initiatives to both contain rising costs and to meet our commitments to serve the health needs of Nunavut.

Our proposed main estimates and business plan for 2008-09 reflect this in a coordinated set of strategies. Mr. Chairman, I would now like to focus in detail on the highlights of some of these key initiatives that are departmental priorities for this coming year:

- 1: Mr. Chairman, because we recognize that the health of individuals and communities depends upon healthy social and physical environments and healthy lifestyle choices, we developed Nunavut's first Public Health Strategy. It focuses on promoting and protecting health and the prevention of illnesses. The strategy is proactive; keeping people healthy today will not only improve our quality of life, but keep our costs down in the future.
- 2: Mr. Chairman, we are strengthening our nursing workforce through education and training and reducing the costly use of agency nurses through the Nunavut Nursing Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

This new strategy is part of our long-term efforts for the recruitment and retention of health care and social service professionals – our doctors and our nurses. We are committed to attracting individuals who want to make nursing in Nunavut a career and to educate, train, and mentor Inuit to enter the nursing profession. A comprehensive compensation and benefits proposal has already been tabled with the Nunavut Employees Union. The collective bargaining is still ongoing.

Once an agreement has been ratified by the NEU, the costs will be incorporated into our budget.

- 3: In order to provide better health care for Nunavummiut throughout the Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, and Qikiqtani regions, the Department of Health and Social Services has developed a multi-year Health Facilities Implementation Plan. This plan will expand the scope and services provided by these health facilities.
- 4: Mr. Chairman, as you know, two new Continuing Care Facilities are being constructed – one in Gjoa Haven and the other in Igloolik. These facilities will keep patients in Nunavut. An implementation plan is currently being developed by the department.

- 5: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to inform you that our department will be updating, revising, and developing an implementation plan for a Mental Health and Addiction Strategy for all of Nunavut. We are currently exploring the potential for establishing a Centre of Excellence for research and treatment of mental health and addiction issues in Nunavut.

- 6: Mr. Chairman, strengthening the financial management of the Department of Health has been an ongoing priority. And, through administrative restructuring, we are clarifying the lines of authority and separating the responsibility for operations from our accountability to develop programs and standards. We are taking proactive steps to strengthen financial management in order to improve the internal budget and variance reporting process, to increase management's financial accountability, and to improve financial training for managers to be completed by May 1, 2008.

The 2008-09 O&M budget for the department is extremely focused. We had to make tough choices and balance the financial limitations with the very real health and social service needs of Nunavummiut. But, I can assure the members that by no means are we reducing the quality of care; we are achieving savings by curbing discretionary expenditures.

We have seen a continued pattern of rapid growth in expenditures. From 2003-04 to 2006-07 the department has shown the highest growth in government with allocations increasing from approximately \$180 million to just over \$236 million, resulting in a growth of budget of \$56 million over a three-year period, or a 31 percent growth rate. The average rate of growth for government is 22 percent. As I have mentioned before, by making investments in public health and preventative care now, we can help offset the high cost of primary health care in the future.

Mr. Chairman, the proposed 2008-09 O&M budget totals \$251,388,000. This is an approximate net increase of \$13.8 million over our revised 2007-08 main estimates of \$237,557,000. We realize that these are target costs; unforeseen problems and evolving priorities may alter the actual initiative costs. Some of the major changes in this proposed budget are as follows:

- **Public Health Strategy**
Just over \$2.4 million is required to implement the new Public Health Strategy.

- **Health Facilities Implementation Plan for Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, and Qikiqtani regions**
Approximately \$2.9 million will be required for the expanded services in the health centres located in Rankin Inlet, Cambridge Bay and for the Qikiqtani General Hospital in Iqaluit.

- **Continuing Care Facilities**

Approximately \$2.1 million will be required for the operation and maintenance of the facilities in Gjoa Haven and Igloolik.

- **Out-of-Territory Hospital Services**
Almost \$3.3 million is required to cover the increased cost of out-of-territory hospital costs.
- **Client Medical Travel**
A little over \$1.8 million is needed to cover increased client medical travel costs.
- **Community Health Centres**
Just over \$1.3 million is required to cover the increased costs to operate the various community health centres in Nunavut.

Mr. Chairman, in summary, my department is proposing additional funding in the amount of approximately \$13.8 million.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity to make these opening comments. I am optimistic about our potential to improve the health status of Nunavummiut and I would be happy to answer any of your questions on the 2008-09 Main Estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services. Thank you.

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

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Yes, I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Does the committee agree to bring in the witnesses?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. (interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses in.

Thank you, Sergeant-at-Arms. (interpretation ends) For the record, minister, please introduce your witnesses. Minister.

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Alex Campbell, the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, and to my right is Raj Downe, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Does the Chair of the Standing Committee on Health and Education have opening remarks? Mr. Alagalak.

Mr. Alagalak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members of the Standing Committee on Health and Education have reviewed the 2008-09 Main Estimates and Business Plan of

the Department of Health and Social Services and I am pleased to provide you with opening comments.

The standing committee notes that the operations and maintenance budget for Health and Social Services for 2008-09 is \$251,388,000. Although this represents an increase of almost \$14 million over the 2007-08 main estimates, the committee remains concerned that budget allocations for some items, especially medical travel, remain unrealistically low. This department has a history of over-expenditure in this area. Recognizing that unexpected situations, such as outbreaks of contagious diseases, can and do require costly and immediate intervention, the committee encourages the minister in her efforts to keep her department's expenditures within budget.

Mr. Chairman, Nunavut now has three brand new regional health facilities which are open and equipped to offer a number of services that have never before been available within this territory. However, patients are still often required to travel to other jurisdictions to receive services. In some cases, this is because our new facilities remain seriously under-staffed.

The recruitment and retention of health professionals such as nurses, physicians and health specialists will be critical to making our investments in these state-of-the-art facilities worthwhile. At the same time, adequate levels of support must be provided to our local community nurses to maintain the high level of care that is provided in our Community Health Centres. Members of the committee continue to urge the government to bring forward further incentives to support Nunavut nursing students in achieving their goal of joining Nunavut's health care work force.

Mr. Chairman, the committee supports the minister and her colleague, the Minister of Education, in their efforts to provide training and education opportunities to Nunavummiut that enable them to enter health care professions.

Committee members are of the view, however, that more could be done to ensure long-term employment for Nunavummiut instead of resorting to short-term hiring solutions.

One area where the lack of staff has a direct impact on the health of our residents is when there is no dedicated social worker or mental health worker in a community. In the High Arctic region, for example, some communities have gone for extended periods of time without a dedicated social worker. Temporary visits by social workers from other communities are not sufficient to address deep-rooted problems and help individuals and their families work through them. The committee strongly urges the department to focus on providing adequate social services in all of Nunavut's communities.

Mr. Chairman, the department's business plan places an emphasis on promoting a new Public Health Strategy. The committee supports a proactive strategy which will focus on keeping people healthy and preventing illness and members will be closely monitoring the department's progress in this area. If adequate training and resources are provided,

community-based Health Committees of Council could be key players in promoting the Public Health Strategy.

In addition, the committee strongly urges the Department of Health and Social Services to give full consideration to instituting measures and providing ongoing resources that will provide long-term support and financial stability to community-based initiatives such as crisis shelters and wellness centres.

Committee members are of the view that health issues such as suicide prevention, substance abuse and domestic violence should be addressed as a priority. The impact of social factors such as poverty, unemployment and lack of housing must be taken into consideration in addressing population health.

Mr. Chairman, the standing committee has noted the department's new Medical Client Travel Policy which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly last November. Members will be closely monitoring the implementation of the Medical Client Travel Policy, especially with regard to the provision of escorts for elders. The committee was pleased to note that the position of Client Services Coordinator has been filled on a temporary basis and looks forward to seeing this position staffed on a permanent basis to address concerns across all regions. It should be noted that members continue to receive concerns from constituents about the operation of the Medical Travel Office located in Pangnirtung.

Mr. Chairman, the committee has noted that the department has undertaken a number of initiatives to implement electronic health information systems for data collection, case management and evaluation. Members look forward to seeing improvements in trend analysis and communicating results as the department works towards addressing specific health issues across the territory.

Mr. Chairman, the committee has recently sent correspondence to the minister requesting further detail and clarification on a number of issues. The committee looks forward to receiving the information that we requested in the near future.

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

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Aglukkaq... (interpretation) Mr. Alagalak. I apologize.

>>*Laughter*

Chairman: Before we proceed, I would like to remind members of the following: according to Rule 77(1), you have ten minutes to speak, and according to Rule 77(2), subject to the discretion of the Chair, a member may speak more than once to a matter under discussion but not until every member wishing to speak has spoken.

I suggest to members that wherever possible you ask your detailed questions during the page-by-page review of the departmental estimates. Do members have any general comments? Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome, minister and your officials. I am happy, along with Mr. Mapsalak, that the funding for health centres were identified but there are some concerns that I have; the amount is not identified there. At this time, it's more verbal commitments.

They have not started the design or preparation up to date, which could have been started if it was left on there, and they will have to make preparations for the sealift by next month. They will have to go up to Arctic Bay and they will have to be at the site before the shipping in April, so I am happy to hear that.

I just visited my constituents and one of the main concerns that we have is with the Medical Transportation Office in Pangnirtung. There haven't been any improvements. For example, I'll use myself, I was trying to get information and I tried to call the office in Pangnirtung for two hours but all I got were recordings, and I know the elders also go through that.

This is still a major concern, especially for my constituents, when we have to travel during the weekend and sometimes, we have to fly during the weekend. The patients going back home from hospitals have to wake up early Saturday morning.

I am still supporting my constituents because it was a lot simpler when the office was here in Iqaluit and we want it moved back to Iqaluit. We didn't encounter any problems when it was here in Iqaluit. I think most of the problems are not just in the Baffin region. I'm pretty sure there are some patients who are left behind.

What happens is... I was going to bring my sticker that they put on there where it states... and this also has an affect on people who are on medical travel. If we leave Iqaluit to go to my community and if the plane cannot land, we have to look for our own accommodations, pay our own meals, and we have to pay for our transportation. That's what we do. The minister mentioned that she was going to talk with the airlines in regard to that.

Those patients who were coming from the hospital... I even know that Mr. Arvaluk was on the flight; he had to get off because one of his constituents didn't have room on the flight.

We see people who are on medical travel, or for example, even an elder who was here for about four weeks and got stuck here because there was no room on the plane. This creates a lot of problems and we still have problems. Yes, we are aware that you don't own the airlines but you deal with medical travel.

Due to the overcrowding of Tammaativvik, government employees sometimes have to stay in hotels. There was a meeting here in town and all of the hotels were booked. This government employee, who was on medical, had to check out by eleven o'clock because of the requirements and because he couldn't leave, there wouldn't be any room and it's left up to those individuals to find their own accommodations. So this problem has not been rectified yet.

In the community of Grise Fiord, there was a case where a grandmother was escorting her grandchild here to Iqaluit. While waiting to be seen by doctors, the doctors had asked to have the grandchild go to the hospital alone. When the grandchild had to go home, she was escorted by a person who was on medical travel coming in from Ottawa. For emergencies like that, there should be a plan. For example, if something happened to the escort, that child probably would have gotten lost and not be able to take care of herself. That has been the case in St. John's.

It's not acceptable the way it is right now and this always comes up. People who are on medical travel to Ottawa don't have escorts. Not too long ago there was an elder who went down without an escort and just very recently, this young person had to bring his or her child down because that person didn't want to go down and was scared.

Mr. Chairman, I think my time is up but I want consent to extend my time.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Mr. Barnabas would like unanimous consent to extend his time. Are there any nays? There are no nays. Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank the members for giving me this opportunity.

There are a lot of problems, especially in my constituency. I am sure that the minister is tired of hearing about me complaining but nothing has been done to date.

I think that there are also problems in the department itself, such as lack of staffing or high turnover. We're seeing more and more agency nurses based in the communities and I am sure that they're not too familiar about the community that they're in. I'm sure that they refer to medical records to find out about their patients.

We have experienced problems way too many times, for example, people being given a prescription for a year, or two, or for the rest of their lives and the patients don't even know what kind of pills they're taking, or what they are for, or why they had to take that medication for years at a time. I have seen people take prescriptions that are not good for them on more than one occasion and they get adverse reactions to the medication. I have been told about this from my constituents and it comes down to a safety issue.

The Tamaatarvik Boarding Home is not a hospital or a medical centre. We do have people who are boarding for a long time and they have chronic conditions. I have heard

of patients who have boarded at Tammaativvik; they go there in good health but then they become ill after they have left because of contagious patients and the different viruses they contract from that facility.

The boarding home, we know for sure, is way too small to accommodate all the people who come down here for medical reasons. It's obviously way too small for the Baffin medical patients who come down here but I am sure that your department will do something about it.

Referring to the Chair's opening comments; we have no social workers in my constituency. The two communities that I represent have only one social worker and this individual has to go back and forth from one community to another. Arctic Bay doesn't have one at all.

Of course, we do need social workers because there are clients who want to see social workers. It is not acceptable and only when it's required does one fly in. Each individual community, no matter how small, should have a social worker because even small communities have every right to those types of services offered in the larger centres, so I will be asking further questions on this.

At this time, I will just thank the minister for dealing with these issues and the letters that I do get from my constituents. Just recently, I got a letter from one of my constituents about getting a wig and they couldn't get it because it wasn't covered under the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program. And also, I'm sure that we'll be able to do something about wheelchairs because it's a necessity for the people in Nunavut.

I'm very pleased and delighted that our health centre will finally become a reality. Well, I did have to table photographs at this House... but when the health centre smells like sewage, you wouldn't want to be staying or working there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. General comments. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very briefly, I am not happy; I had been hoping that in the 2008-09, in the minister's opening comments, I thought she would mention move Pangnirtung office to Iqaluit. During the Finance Minister's Budget Address, he stated that there will be a rollback and he gave us a lot of comments that were very interesting.

The Health Minister could have also mentioned the Medical Travel Office in Pangnirtung. The transportation costs are creating problems because of the office being based in Pangnirtung and I was kind of anticipating that, in her opening comments, she would say something about recentralizing the Pangnirtung office to Iqaluit. I would like her to make a comment before the end of the session about recentralizing that office back to Iqaluit.

There are some people who are paying their own airfares to go home. As Mr. Barnabas had stated earlier, some people... well, he stated that he kept calling the office and they kept getting a recording and because they have that problem so often, they eventually buy their own ticket home. It wasn't meant to be that way.

We will want to see what improvements we will see in the Health Strategy. In your opening comments, you made a statement about the nurses, the education, and to decrease the costs. We would like to see some numbers to see exactly where the cost savings are; I would like to see those figures.

As Mr. Barnabas had stated, I was waiting at the airport to get on the plane, and this patient couldn't get a seat. I eventually let this individual take my seat and I ended up staying here for the weekend. If I hadn't done that, the individual who was still here for medical reasons would have been stuck here and very likely would have kept trying to call the office in Pangnirtung.

Mr. Chairman, it's very simple to fix this problem. As I stated in an earlier comment, there was an interpretation of the time zone which created a huge problem for the whole of Nunavut and it was fixed; we went back to the three time zones. It's the same situation with the office in Pangnirtung; it's very simple to fix like the time zone problem. It's not creating any benefits for Pangnirtung, except for the creation of one PY, but it's creating a huge problem for the patients. Even the people of Pangnirtung get stuck here because there is no travel coordinator here.

I would like to see something before the end of the sitting and I would like to see the minister make a statement saying that at the next spring session, you will see this office recentralized to Iqaluit. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the minister and her officials today. In the four years as MLA, I have come to realize; I already knew this but I've got more of a better perspective on the Department of Health than I did when I wasn't an MLA and even when I was a mayor. I have come to realize that the Department of Health and Social Services is a very demanding and challenging department, and that it's not only in Nunavut but right across Canada – every province and every territory.

Good health/bad health, it's important to all of us and we're concerned that it affects all of us one way or the other. It has a more of an affect on individuals than departments, such as, let's say, the Department of Finance or the Department of Environment. Individuals are intimately connected to the Department of Health, so we tend to hear more from our constituents as MLAs than we would if we had a problem in our community with a garbage dump or a road.

So in the Cambridge Bay riding, I would say most of my issues or concerns that come from constituents are related to the Department of Health. There's no doubt about that.

Although, I noticed a trend over the years that it has been decreasing; in the first couple of years, I would get five or six issues a day, and now, it's down to three or four in a week if I want to just toss out numbers, so I think people are starting to understand health a little better.

Having said that, many of my constituents are still very frustrated when they want to see a nurse or a doctor; they don't understand, for example, that there may be people who are sicker than them that are ahead of them in the queue to see a doctor or a nurse. When you have a shortage of doctors and nurses in the community, they're working 24 hours a day.

I know this happened in Cambridge Bay over the Christmas holidays with the outbreak of flu in the community. I had to explain to some of constituents, "This is how it is," and I think they understood, but still, it didn't make them feel any better that they might have to wait a week. Waiting a couple of days to see a nurse or doctor is acceptable to most people but when they're told they might not get to see a nurse for a week and they're sick right now, it's difficult for them to understand.

In the House the other day I raised the issue of some of my constituents who suffer chronic pain from a variety of ailments. When constituents are in a MLA's office or when they see you in the store, it's very difficult to watch them as they describe their issue and they break into tears when they're telling you how they have been told they have to wait four months, six months, or longer to see a specialist who will diagnose them. In all honesty, I just don't have an explanation for them.

I know down south I have heard of medical patients who had to wait as long as two years to get hip replacements. I know there is a long wait everywhere in Canada but that doesn't help you explain it to people that there is that waiting list while they're suffering and they're suffering with great pain.

Medical travel continues to be an issue for my riding. I've had quite a few people over the last years that have had to travel to Yellowknife or Edmonton for medical travel. The issue was not so much with the patient; it was with their requirement to have a medical escort with them. They wanted to have an escort with them, someone there who could help the doctors to explain their medical condition or options they have when they're meeting with doctors in Yellowknife or Edmonton, or have someone who could help them make those decisions or explain it with more clarity about what the doctor is trying to do to treat them.

I remain very concerned that Health and Social Services is unable to recruit permanent nurses and doctors in Cambridge Bay. I know there are a couple of reasons. It's no secret that agency nurses appear to have a better deal than permanent nurses. I know if I was a nurse, I would probably choose to be an agency nurse as well because you can come in for three weeks or a month and then you go out and have all of your expenses paid, whereas if you were an indeterminate nurse, then you would have to remain in the community and then you'll pay higher rents and pay for the food that you eat. So I know

that's an issue that I hope, through your Nursing Recruitment and Retention Strategy, you will overcome.

Having said that though, continuity is important in treating patients; I know personally that I would rather see a doctor or nurse who I have known for three or four years. It seems like every time I do go to the health centre and I'm seeing a new nurse or new doctor, they don't know my family history or my personal history, so you would have to explain it to them even though they have the file. So that's a big concern.

Another issue or area that I think is going to be a problem for the Department of Health in recruiting nurses or doctors permanently is we have to compete with other jurisdictions. I know in provinces like Alberta, I believe they're opening a new hospital in Edmonton, a specialist hospital for hearts. I'm not 100 percent sure of that but I know they're opening a new hospital and they're going to require 600 nurses. I understand that they're on a recruitment campaign overseas for foreign nurses and they're targeting the Philippines. So any nurse in Canada who is interested in going to Alberta, including nurses in Nunavut, there's that opportunity there.

My constituents are also telling me that they're concerned about the services they receive at the Lena Peterson Boarding Home in Yellowknife. We brought those issues up many times over the years and we continue to urge the minister to have her department monitor the contract to ensure that improvements are being made. It seems like every time I go to Yellowknife on the way here or way home, I have an opportunity to visit the Wal-Mart there and a lot of my constituents stay at the Super 8, which is nearby. So when we're down in an aisle there at Wal-Mart with my shopping cart and their shopping cart, they're telling me about the boarding home or the hospital issues there. So it continues to be an issue for my riding and I'm sure for all of the Kitikmeot.

Another area I think that the department should give some consideration to is improving the communications with patients and the community, not only in Cambridge Bay, or other communities in my riding, but right across Nunavut. I have had representatives of elders who tell me that the elders will go to nursing stations or health centres and they don't understand what the doctors or nurses are telling them of what their diagnosis is; it frightens them to some degree.

I think it would help if the medical department would meet more frequently with the community, not just with the hamlet council but maybe have regular town hall meetings to explain how the on-call nursing program works and how the medical transportation works. It doesn't have to be a big meeting; have 300 people at the meetings; 30 or 40 people might come out where you could explain it.

If you put out some local translated brochures, pamphlets, and posters on the notice board, that would help people understand how the local health facilities operate, how they could get services, and why there are delays. Basically, an overall communication policy would help.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I'll end my comments. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. General comments. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, I would like to welcome the minister, her deputy, and her officials. I cannot see their names, so I cannot address them at this time. Please be welcome during your stay here.

First of all, what we're looking at is that you're asking for over \$250 million in the 2008-09 main estimates. This is not a very small amount. It's a very significant amount. For this reason, while we're here at the House, we are going to be monitoring it and looking at the expenditures that will be used as to how we're moving forward, if they are being carefully managed, if it is an effective amount, and whether or not the programs are impacting our people where assistance is needed. Whether or not we need to make adjustments, we are here to assist the department with suggestions that can improve the services provided. We're not here just to talk about bad things about departments and so on.

Mr. Chairman, prior to starting my commentary, I would like to quickly make this statement. I would like to thank the staff of the Department of Health and Social Services, especially our nurses and doctors. Thank you. We know that some of the communities are struggling with shortages of nurses in Nunavut.

Mr. Chairman, in your business plan, minister, it states that this will move forward in looking for retaining staff and preparing for hiring practices in the communities. We have heard this time and again at least for the last three years, every session that it will be included in the business plans and also significant amounts of resources are involved.

Mr. Chairman, I want to hear from the minister that they will be putting in implementation plans that will implement hiring practices and retention of the staff in Nunavut. This has never come about as of today. The business plans for the staff and retention for the staff has not been put forward. It seems like it's sort of hidden in the back because we don't want to give out any more funding towards this hidden cost.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, I think it's important I state that further that I think that the recruitment and retention plan is something that should be completed soon because I think to have what I call an "elusive plan" is really not justifying funds to be appropriated and asked for when we, in fact, have never even seen either stage one, two, or three, if it takes that long. I don't think the minister should be given any more open-ended strategies. She should have a temporary recruitment plan before she finally finds one that will work.

I don't think the minister should be given a continuing responsibility to continue the agency nursing; the authority that she has to extend the contract to these. I think the minister should know very well that this particular policy is not working; it's not good for teamwork and it's not good for this government to put any additional figures or costs

towards it. I believe we can do a bit more improvement. We can certainly move the funds to the Arctic College and have an accelerated program and not give them a nickel-and-dime to say we need more nurses and only apply it for one year or on an experimental basis.

Secondly, the other important point that I want to see which I think should be addressed, and I want the minister to highlight it, administration of health services. I believe what we have in Nunavut with the Health Department is top-heavy. The minister has tremendous influence and authority over health services, along with the deputy and ADM or directors in the region.

I believe we should separate the health services and have the administration of health services through a non-political appointment of officials, and I did indicate last fall that the minister should consider appointing health administrators in each region and leave the current ADMs, if any, or directors, out there so they can play ball with politicians and local health officials.

Right now, it's dangerous to send a letter to or an email to a director in the region when you won't get any replies now. Because it's politically sensitive, they normally forward, without any comment, to the minister and the minister's office or deputy then provides a response to us.

So for those of us who have experience-d, experienced that, we don't write any more correspondence to directors in the region because I was told that they have a protocol that says, "Once you send me a letter, it goes to the minister." That's political interference. What is the role of the MLA in the region? If it's so sensitive, then restructure the health services so they are completely separate, so the nurses and doctors deal with the administrative issues.

And we, out there with our constituency, must have someone to contact on policy issues, policies that appear not to work, for instance, travel issues and complaints from our constituents; we have many. Our elders sometimes suffer. We tend to intervene without hesitation when we find our elders in the boarding homes either in Winnipeg or any other location having some concerns.

So I think, for the minister to justify the spending of this amount, surely, there is a lot of room to improve the effectiveness of providing services as a whole. I believe that having administrators that are separate from directors, that are sort of politically policy kind of individuals who are separated, would improve not only the relationship between the nursing professions and the doctors but also for the overall health of nursing stations, health centres, and regional groups.

Mr. Chairman, I also found on the business plan, page H-4, reference to the Maternal Training Program has moved on from... I think they didn't use the move to that issue but they used that the training program that has expanded from Rankin Inlet to Iqaluit. I'm a

little sceptical about that because I believe it means that it has been transferred to Iqaluit. So I will need a clarification with respect to that.

I wanted to comment briefly on the Mental Health Training Program that has been initiated. I think that's a good first step. I applauded the government for that but I have some concerns. It's a two-year program but I'm not sure it's an accredited program. I will need to ask the minister why that is the case because for someone to spend that long and not having it accredited really doesn't count in the long run.

(interpretation) That's it Mr. Chairman, before you stop me. (interpretation ends) Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. I was about to stop you. (interpretation ends) General comments. Mr. Alagalak.

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome. I'm so glad to see you here so that we will have clarity between us. Looking at the business plan, there are some things that I'm recalling which are not in it. When I was reading through the main estimates and the budgets for the year and looking at the finances, there are many concerns stemming from the communities. I will use Arviat as an example. I think most communities are very similar in problems that they encounter as municipalities across Nunavut.

One of the biggest issues I tend to worry over in our community is concerning the shortage of nurses. It is a big issue and professionals such as doctors should be reviewed so that people can check their backgrounds and that people in the communities could be satisfied with their work because no one is doing that to date and we are talking about real professionals here. They're trying to save us when they come to the communities and we just don't want to complain all the time. It is difficult when you are a manager faced with these issues, but you have to work on these problems in your community.

For these reasons, although I agreed with Tagak when he was speaking about having contact offices in the regions of Nunavut, there should be a direct contact for legislative matters available for our people and not run by government bureaucrats. I thought a great deal about this, although I do not see any item that helps resolve this problem in the main estimates.

As regular MLAs, the people in the communities are really using our offices as liaison work between our people and the Health Department officials. Many people complain that they have gone to the health centre many times but they were never correctly diagnosed and nothing was done. The next thing you know, they are diagnosed with terminal cancer.

For this reason, it's obvious now that when this is happening, because they have no contact in the community to get answers from, they come to us regular MLAs. The administrators in each region are in the health centres. Personally, I don't like to go there

because I do not deal with health issues on a daily basis. I would have to go through the minister and report some of the problems, as this is the way I tend to handle problems, and look for answers to the problems that are being encountered in our communities.

I start to think that the administrators and the head nurses need to get assistants in the nursing stations to handle a lot of these issues. Although the nurses go about their daily duties, since they have policies and procedures, there still ought to be assistants in the nursing stations. If the nurses keep hearing from the people that are sick coming into the nursing station and trying to get pills for whatever their illness is, they have to follow the procedures and policies, and they use their training and experience to diagnose the problem. This costs a lot of money. It's a huge issue and some of the communities are really behind in health issues.

For those people that keep going back and forth to the southern hospitals and are given their medications, all kinds of different medications, they just think it's for this or that. They see the paper and they look at their diagnosis. So they're given that misdiagnosed chart with the listed medication, a different nurse comes or a different doctor comes in, then the papers of the patient are still being looked after the same way. This is because of what the chart states.

Even if it is a misdiagnosis, because they can't get a second opinion or any contacts where they can go to get answers from, they feel something different from their prescribed illness, start to get sick and the medical chart is saying a different thing from the diagnosis. That is when people start to state that there may be a different sickness than what they are diagnosed with, but the health care workers tend to belittle their concerns. The patients state their cases why they should be re-diagnosed. These things are happening in the communities and they're starting to think this way.

It's not going to cost a lot of money when we put somebody in the community. I ask for an initiative such as a pilot project whereby we find a person who speaks Inuktitut to be a contact person in the nursing station, someone who is friendly, welcoming and available to explain to the person about their health concern.

The patients are sent out time and again, and they keep getting different reports when they go to the nursing station, compared to what they are feeling inside their bodies. That person would be involved with the nurse, the doctors, and the patient, perhaps even monthly. This would really alleviate some of our peoples' concerns and there would be fewer complaints about our nurses and doctors. We have to address these concerns because this highlights some of the issues we face and it is not good to be antagonistic towards someone who is trying to save our lives and assist them so that we can resolve these matters.

I would like to see this suggestion implemented: hire a health liaison officer in the nursing station to be a contact person for our people in the communities so that the patients can come and talk to that person when they have a medical concern. This person

would then take the new concerns to the nurses and doctors as to what's happening with them.

If a patient's condition has changed, then the medical treatment must stop because there may be a new medical issue. I believe that it has to be dealt with and if we do not get this position and something happens to one of our constituents, then who would be at fault? As I stated before, if we can identify who said what to that person and if there was someone at fault, we can find out. Also, it would be easier to work with our health professionals if we had a liaison worker because our people would then start working with the medical staff again.

I believe that it's not going to cost huge sums of money and this could be used as a pilot project. Perhaps start in four or five communities and see if medical issues and concerns lessen in those communities. However, these Inuit individuals working in the health centres would be meeting with the nurses and patients monthly and help them to understand how they could be provided more support, perhaps to figure out what the patient's problem is.

I'm in support of the professional health workers and also with the business plan, but it should be more sensitive to the people out there since people are getting all of these issues at the last minute. We should be looking at solutions to issues, not just more bureaucracy but my reason is this: I'm not going to run to the health centres to tell them what to do or reprimand them after what I heard about certain people because that's not my job. Even though I'm a member of the legislature, I don't have that authority to do so, but I have the ability to help to solve the problems facing my constituents and that's the only thing that I could say.

I believe that we should be very sensitive. Rather than being dissatisfied with the nurses, we should start diminishing that feeling of distrust between the public and the health professionals. I'll conclude with that for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. General comments. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the minister and his officials here. I know that over the years, the Department of Health I think is up here first because probably one of the biggest budgets in the department, it has been pointed out by a number of my colleagues that it seems it's always broken the law by over-spending their budget.

For years, not only with the Department of Health but with other government departments as well, I have been questioning, "How realistic are these numbers that we're looking at in these budgets that are presented before us?" I think that's something that's been a concern of mine long before any of the officials that are here today were there but it's a reoccurring thing.

One of the items I mentioned a couple of years ago is that I think what we need to really look at doing as a government, I know how our budgets are based on historical numbers and then given targets based on those historical numbers rather than over time; maybe we should look at, in certain areas, is something like a zero-based budgeting type of process to figure out what exactly we need for that department or for whatever department. I think Health, in some areas, could benefit from that.

One of the other concerns I have and have had with, as some of my other colleagues have pointed out in their comments, is just the staffing. Over the last three years, we have seen a mass exodus of people from the department; I looked at, in two weeks in December, I think there were like eight senior staff positions advertised for the Department of Health for two Executive Directors, five Directors, and an Assistant Deputy Minister. Those kinds of exodia make one wonder what's really going on there to see things like that occur.

I have also seen, over the last three years, a steady increase on the reliance of agency nurses. A few years ago, we were finally getting things under control; we all thought. That year, as Chair of Government Operations and Accountability, we had the Auditor General's hearings and the lead government witness said, "Finally, we expect Health to come in in the black," and lo and behold, they never find out until after year end that they weren't. Since then, it seems to have just gotten worse. We have increased funding; I think that there is, overall, a \$26 million increase in their base budget thanks to something that Mr. Picco pushed for when he was the Health Minister and got, and still, these things are occurring. Again, that chronic occurrence of that happening leaves me to really question the integrity of the numbers. I think it's something that we really have to have a serious look at.

We have seen the huge increase and demand on agency nurses, so I'll be looking to find out, let's say over the last three years, how that demand has grown. We have the three regional health facilities that have opened recently. How much of it is operational? How much of it closed down because we don't have staff?

Recently, I heard the operating room here is shut down because there are no operating nurses. These are the things here. I have talked to two of the operating nurses that said that they just quit because they had enough. I will be looking for some clarification on exactly what's open and what's not in the regional health facilities.

There are a lot of concerns out there and I think we have to look at, as one of my colleagues mentioned earlier, especially, the significant amount of resources that this government spends in that area. It really needs to be looked at.

One of the other areas I think that needs some closer attention is the fact that there needs to be more emphasis on mental health and social services, I mean psychologists and things like that, for kids in our school system. There never seems to be any consistency in those fields. If you have a young person referred to go see a psychologist, they'll see one person once and the next time someone else. We all know that, especially in that area, the

importance of having some stability and continuing opportunity to participate in that kind of help for those individuals who need it. I think that's extremely important. If you look at our high suicide rate, it's a good example that those services are missing. I'm not saying that would resolve it, but hopefully, if it helps in one case, it's worth it. I think that that's an important area that we need to look at.

I will have lots of other questions and comments to make, Mr. Chairman, but that's it for now, other than something that I have stated over and over in the last few years is we have some serious concerns with the department and the direction that it's been going over the last few years.

I'm really looking forward to actually having the Auditor General go in and do her audit on the department to, hopefully, be able to give us some good information to be able to affect some positive changes in the department that is one of the largest drawers on our resources because I think we need to make sure we're doing everything we can to try and make it work properly and look at it objectively.

With that, I'll finish my opening comments there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. General comments. Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have too much to state with my general comment but I would like to acknowledge an individual who just came here and who's sitting in the Gallery, Leah Kituqqaq from Repulse Bay. Her husband used to be my campaign manager. I would like to welcome her. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>*Applause*

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. I have no more members on my list. Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess that concludes the opening comments, so given that, I'll say with only three ministers here, I should make a motion to delete the budget but maybe I'll just make a motion to report progress instead. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. There's a motion on the floor and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion, please raise your hand. Opposed. The motion is carried. I'll now rise to report progress.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Please be seated. Going to the Orders of the Day. Item 21. Report of Committee of the Whole. Mr. Arreak.

Item 21: Report of Committee of the Whole

Mr. Arreak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 23 and the Main Estimates, and would like to report progress. Also, Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be concurred with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arreak. Is there a seconder? Thank you, Mr. Curley. The motion is in order. All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried.

Item 22. Third Reading of Bills. Item 23. Orders of the Day. Mr. Clerk.

Item 23: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Orders of the Day for February 22:

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

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Clerk. Our House stands adjourned until Friday, March 22, I'm sorry, February 22 and we'll reconvene at 10:00 in the morning.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 17:21*

