



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT**

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**Wednesday, February 27, 2008**

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**Iqaluit**

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

## Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

### *Speaker*

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(Pangnirtung)

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(Nattilik)

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**Hon. Levinia Brown**

(Rankin Inlet South – Whale Cove)

*Deputy Premier; Minister of Community and Government Services*

**Hon. Paul Okalik**

(Iqaluit West)

*Premier; Minister of Justice; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs*

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk**

(South Baffin)

*Minister of Environment; Minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Board*

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(Cambridge Bay)

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**David Simailak**

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**James Arvaluk**

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(Nanulik)

*Minister of Economic Development and Transportation; Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation*

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk**

(Amittuq)

*Minister of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth; Minister of Human Resources; Minister of Finance; Chairman, Financial Management Board*

**Hunter Tootoo**

(Iqaluit Centre)

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## Table of Contents

Opening Prayer.....	2988
Ministers' Statements .....	2988
Members' Statements .....	2991
Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery.....	2998
Oral Questions.....	2998
Tabling of Documents .....	3017
Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters .....	3018
Report of the Committee of the Whole .....	3046
Orders of the Day .....	3046

**A.**

**Daily References**

Wednesday, February 27, 2008 ..... 2988

**B.**

**Ministers' Statements**

142 – 2(4): Park Development on Kekerten Island (Akesuk) ..... 2988

143 – 2(4): Coordination of the Delivery of Benefits to Nunavut's Low-Income Seniors (Picco)  
..... 2989

144 – 2(4): Development of Socio-Economic Monitoring Committees (Netser) ..... 2989

145 – 2(4): Federal Budget 2008 (Tapardjuk)..... 2990

**C.**

**Members' Statements**

330 – 2(4): Baker Lake Hospice Society's Operations (Simailak)..... 2992

331 – 2(4): Cape Dorset Artist's Artwork on NorthwesTel's Phonebook (Akesuk)..... 2992

332 – 2(4): Kugaaruk Students Travel South for School Exchange (Mapsalak)..... 2993

333 – 2(4): 28th Wedding Anniversary (Netser)..... 2993

334 – 2(4): Affordable Storefront Office Space (Peterson) ..... 2994

335 – 2(4): Reaction to Federal Budget (Tootoo) ..... 2994

336 – 2(4): Gjoa Haven Hockey Tournament Champions and Athletes from Nattilik to AWG  
(Aglukkaq)..... 2996

337 – 2(4): Canadian Sovereignty, Devolution and Federal Budget (Curley) ..... 2997

338 – 2(4): 2008 Federal Budget (Barnabas) ..... 2998

**D.**

**Oral Questions**

417 – 2(4): Awarding of Medical Travel Contract (Tootoo).....	2998
418 – 2(4): Marine Service Fees (Barnabas).....	3000
419 – 2(4): 2008 Federal Budget (Curley) .....	3002
420 – 2(4): Airline Service to Remote Nunavut Communities (Arvaluk).....	3003
421 – 2(4): Small Community Initiatives Program Policy (Alagalak).....	3004
422 – 2(4): 2008 Federal Budget – Gas Tax Fund (Peterson).....	3006
423 – 2(4): Baker Lake Dock (Simailak) .....	3008
424 – 2(4): Update on Air Quality at Sanikiluaq School (Kattuk).....	3010
425 – 2(4): Renovation of Older Housing Units (Mapsalak) .....	3012
426 – 2(4): Status of Disaster Assistance Policy for the Government of Nunavut (Curley).....	3013
427 – 2(4): \$89.1 Million Contingency Fund (Tootoo).....	3015

**E.**

**Tabling of Documents**

184 – 2(4): Foster Parent Handbook (Aglukkaq) .....	3018
---	------

**F.**

**Committee Motions**

Committee Motion 012 – 2(4): Deferral of Consideration of the 2008-2009 Main Estimates of the Department of Health and Social Services (Tootoo) .....	3038
--	------

**G.**

**Bills**

Bill 23 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2008-2009 – Consideration in Committee – Health & Social Services.....	3018
---	------

**Iqaluit, Nunavut**  
**Wednesday, February 27, 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. 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): Thank you. Let us pray.

>>*Prayer*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Good afternoon, Mr. Premier, Ministers, and Members. Welcome. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Environment, Minister Akesuk.

**Item 2: Ministers' Statements**

**Minister's Statement 142 – 2(4): Park Development on Kekerten Island**

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Good afternoon, my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform members that staff from my Nunavut Parks and Special Places Division will be proceeding this summer with the reconstruction of the Scottish whaling station on Kekerten Island in Cumberland Sound.

The community of Pangnirtung initiated this project in the hopes of increasing the interpretive potential of this significant historical site for both residents and visitors.

The transportation of the materials for this project along with the reconstruction will be lead through local invitational tenders in hopes of securing local labour in the community of Pangnirtung.

Through this and other projects, we are highlighting Nunavut's territorial parks and special places to the increasing numbers of territorial, national and international visitors; and to strengthen parks-based tourism in local communities.

Nunavut's territorial parks and special places are more than simply destinations - they are part our identity and need to be experienced. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Minister's Statements. Minister of Education, Minister Picco.

**Minister's Statement 143 – 2(4): Coordination of the Delivery of Benefits to Nunavut's Low-Income Seniors**

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to announce that on January 7, 2008, the Government of Nunavut took over the responsibility for the merged payments of the Senior Citizens Supplementary Benefit. Now, for the first time, the Department of Education and the Government of Canada were able to coordinate the delivery of benefits to Nunavut's low-income seniors.

Mr. Speaker, this was a joint effort between the Department of Education's Income Support Division and the federal government's Department of Public Works and Government Services. Previous, Mr. Speaker, the Government of the Northwest Territories was contracted to deliver this service on our behalf.

Mr. Speaker, the federal government, our partner, provides support to low-income seniors through various initiatives, including its Old Age Security Program as well as government income supplements and allowances. The Government of Nunavut provides an income-tested benefit known as the Senior Citizens Supplementary Benefit. Nunavut's seniors will continue to receive one full payment that combines these benefits.

Mr. Speaker, this new method of delivery is easier for both the seniors receiving the supplementary benefit and for those who implement and monitor its effectiveness.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of the Northwest Territories' Department of Education, Culture and Employment for their cooperation and support over the past nine years in delivering this service on our behalf. I would also like to thank and extend a thank you to the staff working in the Informatics Planning and Services Division at the Department of Community and Government Services. Their role was critical in making this project a success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Minister's Statement 144 – 2(4): Development of Socio-Economic Monitoring Committees**

**Hon. Patterk Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to inform the Members of this House of the progress being made on the establishment of monitoring committees within Nunavut.

These committees are being established to monitor and report on socio-economic effects of major development projects, such as mines in the territory.

Mr. Speaker, each mines approved for development in Nunavut is required by the Nunavut Impact Review Board to create a socio-economic monitoring program and to participate in a regional socio-economic monitoring committee.

Mr. Speaker, the monitoring committees will track and report on the level of local involvement in these mining projects. These committees will assist both the mining companies and communities to assess the impact of the mine and to identify what must be done to increase local jobs and business opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, my department, with the assistance of other Government of Nunavut departments, Indian & Northern Affairs Canada and the Nunavut Impact Review Board, is working to ensure that each committee includes representatives from the territorial and federal governments, regional Inuit associations, communities, and the mining companies.

Mr. Speaker, in the coming weeks, my department will meet with these parties to consult with them and agree on a common approach to monitoring social and economic impacts in the regions.

Mr. Speaker, the monitoring committees will be an important step in ensuring that the territory and its people attain the full benefits of mines and other major development projects in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Finance and CLEY, Minister Tapardjuk.

### **Minister's Statement 145 – 2(4): Federal Budget 2008**

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We paid close attention during the 2008 Federal Budget Speech yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, there was good news in the budget for Nunavummiut. There are several changes to personal taxes, including the announcement of a 10 percent increase in the Northern Residents Deduction effective January 1, 2008. This is a good start on increasing our competitiveness in attracting and retaining skilled workers. This is also evidence of making our voices heard by standing together to unanimously pass the motion in November asking the federal government to increase the deduction. I want to congratulate all Members of this House on this outcome, as well as thanking our partners, like the Nunavut Economic Forum and our sister territories - the Northwest Territories and the Yukon - in making this happen.



Mr. Speaker, while the announcement of \$8 million over two years to construct a commercial harbour in Pangnirtung is a start in implementing the Small Craft Harbours Report; Mr. Speaker, Nunavut has six other communities that could benefit from having commercial harbours. I am sure that the communities of Qikiqtarjuaq, Clyde River, Pond Inlet, Repulse Bay, Chesterfield Inlet, and Kugaaruk would agree that an additional investment of at least \$37 million by a federal partner would also benefit their communities economically. Nunavut would like to see the report fully implemented and extended to all of our communities in the future.

The new tax-free saving account will allow Nunavummiut to save the money, and then access it penalty-free, with no restrictions on what they can save for. With more and more Nunavummiut entering the wage economy, Mr. Speaker, Nunavut needs initiatives such as this to support the health of financial management of our households.

I was also pleased, Mr. Speaker, by the announcement of a new polar class icebreaker to replace the CCGS Louis S. St-Laurent. More importantly, I understand that the new icebreaker will double the amount of time it is in use per year compared to the Louis St-Laurent from 135 days to 270 days, or nine months.

Mr. Speaker, a new aboriginal economic development framework was also announced. This initiative will have to be closely monitored to ensure that Nunavummiut benefit from the framework. In addition, \$147 million over two years has been committed to stabilize current First Nations and Inuit health programs and promote closer integration with provincial systems in order to achieve better health outcomes. I look forward to a federal announcement providing more details on this program soon.

Mr. Speaker, a new Police Officers Recruitment Fund will benefit our territory. Nunavut will be receiving \$800,000 over five years towards recruiting and increasing the number of RCMP officers in our communities. I am sure that all members will agree that this will build healthier communities.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to working with my federal counterparts in the development of programs and funding parameters for the newly announced funding to ensure that Nunavut receives its fair share and will update Members of the House as that work progresses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

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

**Member's Statement 330 – 2(4): Baker Lake Hospice Society's Operations**

**Mr. Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is my first time from this side.

There is something very exciting going on at the Baker Lake Hospice Society. This society has their own committee and it's a voluntary committee. The society mainly deals with the Martha Talerook Centre, which is an elders' facility and it started in 2002 in Baker Lake. There are now nine elders that are being looked after and only eight are getting paid because the centre is too small. There are 20 people who work there either part-time or full-time.

I believe there are about seven homecare workers that are working there, they also run the shelters for women and men, and they are also responsible for the Hospice Society. For three days a week, they feed the elders during lunchtime and this is very beneficial to the community of Baker Lake.

The Martha Talerook Centre used to be a children's group home. The building is getting old and renovations are required for the windows, there's also not enough room because of the increasing number of elders in the community. We expect that it will be renovated in the near future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*>>Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Simailak. Members' Statements. Member for South Baffin, Mr. Akesuk.

**Member's Statement 331 – 2(4): Cape Dorset Artist's Artwork on NorthwTel's Phonebook**

**Hon. Olayuk Akesuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the NorthwTel phonebook cover is done by an artist from Cape Dorset with a man at the seal hole and it will be on the cover of the phonebook. Qummuaqtuq Ashoona grew up in Cape Dorset and he attended the Jewellery Metalwork course at the Arctic College here in Iqaluit.

The phonebook will be released soon and the artwork that that person is being circulated around Canada. It will be at the Nunatta Sunakkutaangit Museum on March 8. So we're very excited that he made that carving. Thank you.

*>>Applause*

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

**Member's Statement 332 – 2(4): Kugaaruk Students Travel South for School Exchange**

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to wish a number of Kugaaruk students a great trip. Mr. Speaker, 12 young people from grade seven, eight, and nine have been chosen to go on a WMCA school exchange with the Ontario school.

Mr. Speaker, as part of the exchange, our community will hosts students from Ontario Hillside Public School from April 10 to 18, 2008. I am sure they have plans to make this a memorable trip to Nunavut, and we look forward to introducing them to our way of life.

Mr. Speaker, our school from Kugaaruk will then travel to Southern Ontario where they will visit Toronto. I am sure that it will be an eye-opening experience to go from our small community to Canada's biggest city.

Mr. Speaker, during the exchange, both groups of students will research global warming issues and record their findings.

Mr. Speaker, the youth who were chosen were selected because they had excellent school attendance and because they worked hard for it. Their hard work has now paid off, but the work continues through fundraising efforts and I applaud their initiative.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain they will have a great experience and many stories to tell when they return.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in wishing the students a great exchange trip. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. We wish them a great trip. Members' Statements. Member for Nanulik, Mr. Netser.

**Member's Statement 333 – 2(4): 28th Wedding Anniversary**

**Hon. Patterk Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I would like to take this moment to wish my dear wife a happy belated anniversary. Yesterday we celebrated our 28th wedding anniversary.

(interpretation) She wasn't able to be here, Mr. Speaker, but I have been with my wife for 28 years, and just recently, when my mother passed away, if it wasn't for my wife, I would have given up. So I would like to say that I love her very much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

**Member's Statement 334 – 2(4): Affordable Storefront Office Space**

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We often speak in the House about the economic opportunities that abound in our Nunavut communities. We must give tremendous credit to Nunavut entrepreneurs for having ideas, taking risks and starting businesses that employ people and contribute to our economic growth.

Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to start a business in Nunavut. In most communities, entrepreneurs do not have the business support services that businesses in the south take for granted.

For example, many of our entrepreneurs do not have direct or easy access to accountants, bookkeepers, lawyers, bankers, and employment centres. They must become instant experts in all of these services in order to survive.

Mr. Speaker, another huge challenge that our entrepreneurs face is the availability of affordable storefront office space. In Cambridge Bay, our economic development potential is restricted because we don't have any office space.

Mr. Speaker, many years ago when we enjoyed an Economic Development Agreement, there was a program that assisted communities to construct business service centres.

The business service centre concept is widely used across Canada in communities to assist businesses to start up without incurring enormous costs to construct their own building.

Mr. Speaker, another advantage of a business service centre is that it allows businesses access to support services that are critical to the success of new businesses. It is well-known that 80 percent of new businesses in Canada fail within five years; imagine how tough it is in Nunavut to start up and survive for five years.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Department of Economic Development and Transportation to explore ways to help provide affordable storefront office space for entrepreneurs who want to open businesses in communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Member's Statement 335 – 2(4): Reaction to Federal Budget**

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today, like the Minister of Finance, to react to this year's federal budget, which was unveiled yesterday in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, all members recognize that you have been a tireless advocate for Pangnirtung's needs, and I would like to begin by noting that yesterday's announcement for a new commercial harbour for Pangnirtung was probably the best thing about this budget.

I sincerely hope to be able to rise in this House next year and applaud the announcement of a new deep water port for Iqaluit that was promised by the Prime Minister during the last campaign.

Mr. Speaker, I rose in the House last week to raise concerns regarding quota allocations in the Nunavut fishery. I am hopeful that this new federal investment in harbour infrastructure will encourage Ottawa to rethink its recent and outrageous decision on quota allocations.

Mr. Speaker, I view yesterday's announcement of a 10 percent enhancement to the Northern Residents Deduction as a half step forward. It's good to see some movement on this issue after years of federal inaction.

I believe that this movement is due in no small part to the tireless efforts of the Members of this House and Northern Parliamentarians who have pushed for change.

Last fall, this House unanimously passed a motion on the issue of a Northern Residents Deduction.

While there is still much distance to cover before benefits catch up to the realities of today's cost of living, yesterday's announcement does show that when we rise as one and speak with a single voice, we can achieve results. Mr. Speaker, that change is the first one in 22 years and I look forward to further increases that take these realities into account, as well as some type of regular indexing mechanism to keep up with the ever increasing cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed with a number of elements in yesterday's federal budget.

Most critically, we did not see any new funding to fully address Nunavut's ongoing housing crisis. I have been saying for many years that the housing crisis is at the root of many of the social problems facing our communities. The \$200 million that we received under the Northern Housing Trust was a good start but that's all it was.

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

**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 and colleagues.

Like I was saying, it was a good start but that's all it was, a start. We have to continue to face, as a government and as a territory, the challenges of keeping up with the O&M costs and other pressures related to housing.

I think if the federal government can find \$7.4 billion for military hardware and facilities related to Arctic sovereignty, surely it can find adequate resources to better address housing needs and the human dimension of sovereignty.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to continuing to contribute, along with all of us, to our collective efforts to achieve progress in meeting the needs of Nunavut and Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Members' Statements. Member for Nattilik, Ms. Aglukkaq.

**Member's Statement 336 – 2(4): Gjoa Haven Hockey Tournament Champions and Athletes from Nattilik to AWG**

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to report that for the third year Gjoa Haven continues their winning tradition as the champions of the Kitikmeot Hockey Tournament. This year the tournament was held in Kugluktuk from February 22 to 25 and includes teams from every Kitikmeot community.

Mr. Speaker, the team from Gjoa Haven went undefeated throughout the tournament. This is quite a feat when you consider all the talent we have in the Kitikmeot hockey circles.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the following Gjoa Haven players; Darryl Kogvik - Dennis Qirqqut - Brandan Okpik - Warren Rudolph - Geordie Pauloosie - Corey Aglukkaq - Craig Aglukkaq - Gary K. Takkiruuq - Brian Qirqqut - Levi Otokiak - Palla Porter and Chester Arqviq.

I would also like to thank the community of Kugluktuk on behalf of the Nattilikmeot for their hospitality that they showed to all the visiting hockey players.

As well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to also recognize the athletes from the Nattilikmeot Riding who have been selected to participate in the Arctic Winter Games: Craig Aglukkaq, for being chosen as one of the players on Midget Hockey, representing Nunavut; and, Mr. Speaker, I'm especially proud of that fact that Gjoa Haven will also be sending four female hockey players to the Arctic Winter Games and I

would like to congratulate: Valerie Puqiqnak, Sharon Takkiruq, Sheila Konana and Pamela Aglukkaq for being selected as part of Team Nunavut.

I wish them all the best during Arctic Winter Games. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

### **Member's Statement 337 – 2(4): Canadian Sovereignty, Devolution and Federal Budget**

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wanted to make a comment in regard to the federal budget that was announced yesterday, and I would like to say thank you to the Member for Iqaluit Centre.

The 10 percent deduction is very beneficial but it's still way too small. If we look at 23 years, the cost of living has gone up a lot more than 10 percent. We would like to urge the ministers to lobby the federal government because we are limited in our infrastructure and the increasing cost of fuel and everything else are also contributing to the high cost of living.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make a comment on Canadian sovereignty. We hear that they're going to be building a new icebreaker and I don't think it has anything to do with sovereignty. It helps to have Grise Fiord up there; that's part of sovereignty; there is Resolute Bay and other communities. Those communities are the ones that make up sovereignty and it has nothing to do with icebreakers.

They said the St-Laurent is too old, so they're going to be building a new one but it's not going to make any major impact on Canadian sovereignty.

In the federal budget, we didn't any devolution or resource development which would boost the Nunavut economy. We have one dock and one ship, so I would like to tell all of the Members in this House that we're being put on the backburner by the federal government.

Of course, I would like to see more money for public housing. So, as ministers, I would like you to work over the summer to make sure that you lobby the federal government on those issues. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Members' Statements. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. Barnabas.

**Member's Statement 338 – 2(4): 2008 Federal Budget**

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to make a comment on the highlights of the 2008 Federal Budget. In there, there is \$270 million that will be used over the two years for aboriginal programs, and again, there are monies to be used for water quality.

One thing that I don't like is our government is going to be using \$5 billion by 2010-11. This money that is going out of Canada is \$5 billion which would hugely benefit the people of Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Members' Statements. If there are no more Members' Statements, Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Mr. Premier.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize an individual who is in the Gallery. I have been working with him for approximately 20 years, and again, debated from different sides of the table when we were dealing with wildlife and islands. This individual is from Nunavik and is currently one of the executives from Makivik. He has been in the political field for a very long time. I would like to welcome to the Gallery Johnny Peter, his wife, Elisapee, and his co-worker at Makivik, Adam Paallajaq.

>>Applause

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Welcome to the Gallery. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Welcome to the Gallery everyone and also our television audience.

Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit Centre, Mr. Tootoo.

**Item 6: Oral Questions****Question 417 – 2(4): Awarding of Medical Travel Contract**

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

Mr. Speaker, I'm sure, as all members are aware, that all members were invited to an evening gathering with the senior officials from Canadian North last night, and Mr. Speaker, I was a little bit surprised to hear from those senior officials indicating that they had been awarded the medical travel contract.



So I would just like to ask the Minister of Health if she can confirm if they have, in fact, issued and awarded the medical travel contract. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister Aglukkaq.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can confirm that our medical travel contract has been awarded to three airlines. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister inform me and the members here why the members had to hear it from one of the successful airlines and not an announcement coming from the government itself? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister Aglukkaq.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The works in finalizing the contracts rests with the Department of CG&S, and the Department of CG&S, I believe, has just met with the airlines to outline the decisions of Cabinet and FMB on that process.

I would be happy to do a public press release in terms of the airlines that have been awarded the contracts to all of the airlines in Nunavut that were part of this process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister inform the House when that decision was made and when those three airlines were informed of the decision that the government made? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister Aglukkaq.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The final decision was made last week, I believe, on Thursday. When the Department of CG&S contacted the airlines, I have to ask my colleague, Minister Brown, when those contacts were made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know medical travel contracts have been an issue in the past that I have raised on the medevac contract that was issued here for the Baffin; there always seems to be someone that isn't happy with the outcome. I'm just wondering

if the minister can inform us if there have been any issues or concerns raised to the department as a result of the decision that the government made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister Aglukkaq.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No one has contacted me personally in regard to whether they're happy or unhappy about the contract. I will contact the Department of CG&S and see if there have been expressed concerns and get back to the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 418 – 2(4): Marine Service Fees**

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions today are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

As the minister will recall, the Legislative Assembly passed a formal motion on March 17, 2005 concerning the issue of marine service fees. The motion called on the Government of Nunavut to lobby the federal government to exempt all vessels providing sealift services operating North of 60.

Mr. Speaker, I recently had an opportunity to review the transcripts from a meeting of the Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans that was held earlier this month. I was very interested to note that the senior federal official told the committee that the Canadian Coast Guard passed, "produced a discussion paper last year on Arctic services fees that was shared with the shipping industry, the Government of Nunavut and other territorial governments."

Can the minister indicate to the House today whether he has had an opportunity to review this discussion paper and will he commit to tabling it in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Patterk Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The member is correct. The services fees for cargo moving from a non-remote site to remote sites in Nunavut annually over \$100,000 is being charged and the fees are transferred down to the person ordering stuff from the south.

As for the question for the discussion paper, I haven't seen it so I can't comment on that. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Barnabas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of marine service fees have been a longstanding concern for companies that ship to the North. Coast Guard officials told the Senate Committee that, “the total amount that we collect on marine service fees in the Arctic is \$100,000 per year. I hope that we are able to come to a solution that works for all of us before the start of the next shipping season in June.”

Can the minister indicate to the House today how his department has responded to the direction given by the Legislative Assembly to lobby the federal government on this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Patterk Netser:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Like the Small Craft Harbours Program that we have been lobbying on the federal government on, and we just heard that just the one community got the funding. We have been lobbying the feds on that particular issue and it's all in their hands. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Barnabas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister knows, I am very concerned about the high cost of living in the High Arctic and have spoken in this House on many occasions on the issue. Can the minister indicate to me what the GN's strategy is to address the issue of reducing the cost of transporting goods to the High Arctic? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Patterk Netser:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are all concerned about the high cost of transportation, especially up into the High Arctic, and our position is that all cargo entering into Nunavut should be exempted from the marine navigation service fees. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Barnabas:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Will the minister commit to provide a formal update to this House on our spring sitting on the issue of marine service fees and will he table the documents when he receives them? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Patterk Netser:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We hope to be in contact with the DFO Minister within the next few weeks and we will certainly bring this issue up, and I can commit to tabling the documents if required. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Question 419 – 2(4): 2008 Federal Budget**

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, although yesterday's federal budget included some long overdue improvements to the Northern Residents Deduction, it is obvious that these changes do not go nearly far enough to meeting the needs of our territory's residents.

Will the minister assure this House that he will continue to vigorously lobby his federal counterpart for further improvements to the Northern Residents Deduction? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, it is obvious today that this has begun but it has sort of awakened the federal government concerning the deductions for the taxes.

Mr. Speaker, we will be looking at it more closely within our Finance Department as to how we could lobby the federal government and also the people of Nunavut, the Yukon, and the NWT will be working with them on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is clear to me that the Northern Residents Deduction needs to be revamped to recognize the real differences between the three territories. In the NWT and Yukon, a significant percentage of the population lives in the only two urban centres of the North, both of which are connected to the south by roads. In Nunavut, the majority of our population lives in small and remote communities. Will the minister undertake to educate Ottawa on the unique circumstances and needs of Nunavut? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I agree. They need to understand that we don't have any trees, we don't have roads, we don't have highways, and it's a cold climate. We are unique and our livelihood is different than those that live down south. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is obvious that this was raised by one of the Members of the Legislative Assembly. Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed to see a lack of new resources in such areas as housing. Can the minister assure me that he will work with the Minister of Housing to continue lobbying Ottawa on this issue? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Housing and I will be able to work together as to how we can lobby the federal government and he can assist me with this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The federal government has agencies that are specifically dedicated to supporting economic development and diversification in the country's different regions. There are separate agencies responsible for Atlantic Canada, Northern Ontario, Quebec, and Western Canada. Can the minister indicate to the House today what efforts the government is making to improve the way that Ottawa provides economic development assistance to the North? Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. That was your final supplementary. Minister of Finance, Minister Tapardjuk.

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the member's question, I don't know the answer but I will provide that answer to him when I know what the answer is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 420 – 2(4): Airline Service to Remote Nunavut Communities**

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, as you will recall, the Legislative Assembly passed a formal motion on November 21, 2006, Mr. Barnabas was the mover and Mr. Evyagotailak seconded the motion, concerning the urgent need for the GN to work with the Northern Air Transport Association to bring forward an action plan to improve the availability of affordable and reliable air service to our smaller communities.

Can the minister provide an update today on the status of his department's actions on this important issue? 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, I have not been briefed on the issue, (interpretation ends) so I'll have to take it as notice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Netser. The minister has taken your question as notice. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat, Mr. Alagalak.

#### **Question 421 – 2(4): Small Community Initiatives Program Policy**

**Mr. Alagalak**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) I would like to direct my question to (interpretation ends) the Minister responsible for Economic Development and Transportation, and it's referring to the Small Community Initiatives Program Policy.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, the Budget Address of 2006-07 announced that \$5 million from the Northern Strategy Trust Fund would be invested in community economic development. The Commissioner's Address at the opening of this Fourth Session stated that the Small Community Initiatives (interpretation ends) Program Policy had been developed and that communities would start to receive funding for community-based economic initiatives.

Can the minister update this House on which communities have received funding under this program to date? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Patterk Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regards to the member's question, this funding is geared toward the communities that are non-decentralized. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Perhaps, he didn't quite understand my question.

How many communities have received funding in Nunavut? I'm sure he'll be able to respond. (interpretation ends) Can the minister provide an update on how much funding from the original \$5 million has been allocated to date? (interpretation) I'm sure that's clearer for him, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Patterk Netser**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe that the funding that he is talking about is supposed to sunset by 2009. As for how much money has been spent, I do not have the figures at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Can the minister clarify how long this pot of funding will be available for small community program initiatives? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Patterk Netser**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The funding that the funding is referring to, as I said earlier, is set to sunset by 2009. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question again because they don't seem to know.

In 2006-07, the commissioner stated that this was established in those years and it was very interesting to hear. They had the policy completed and the funding was ready to be dispersed, and they identified the process of how the communities would be funded.

(interpretation ends) Can the minister clarify what kinds of criteria will be considered when approving future applications for funding under the Small Community Initiatives Program and whether non-decentralized communities will also be able to apply? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Member Alagalak. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Netser.

**Hon. Patterk Netser:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The funding that the member is referring to is if there will be economic benefits through this program, then it's going toward the non-decentralized communities and (interpretation) initiatives. The smaller communities will be able to use this funding of \$5 million for economic development. Thank you.

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

**Question 422 – 2(4): 2008 Federal Budget – Gas Tax Fund**

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Finance. Like my colleagues, Mr. Tootoo and Mr. Curley, it's concerning the Federal Budget 2008 announced yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, earlier in this sitting, I mentioned that Indian and Northern Affairs conducted a survey in 2006-07 of basket food costs in various communities in the North. In Cambridge Bay, for a family of four, a basket of food costs \$382 per week, and \$206 for a family four in Yellowknife. I believe that the federal government was using Yellowknife or Whitehorse figures to calculate the 10 percent increase.

My question for the Minister of Finance: has the Government of Nunavut calculated the annual benefit of a 10 percent increase to the Northern Residence Deduction to a family of four living here in Nunavut now? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The cost of living for food baskets and the prices of groceries is set according to the size of the community. They are set up by Indian Affairs and we try to provide assistance to them when the federal government and DIAND are doing the assessment.

We heard that the Northern Residents Deduction was increased by 10 percent. We believe that this is just an initial step and we believe that this will be increased some time in the future. And also, we can probably negotiate this some time in the future. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the Minister of Finance for that answer. Ten percent is a start, but it hasn't been changed for 22 years. The Nunavut Economic Forum, in their report, indicated that we need a 60 to 65 percent increase just to bring the Northern Residents Deduction into 2008 levels to help people in Nunavut. So I'm hoping that it is a start, otherwise, we're just going to fall further and further behind. It's already very costly for people up in Nunavut.



Earlier, in answer to one of my colleague's questions, the minister indicated that he would meet with his northern colleagues to talk about lobbying the federal government. I would like to ask the minister and he's had time to think about this: what specific lobbying issues will the minister undertake with his northern colleagues to convince the federal government that residents in remote northern and Arctic communities need improved residency deductions to help them cope with the escalating cost of living? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have not discussed this matter with the NWT and the Yukon on how we are planning to deal with this issue because we only heard about the news yesterday.

I can tell the member, Mr. Speaker, that, in the upcoming weeks, we will be able to consider this further and the northern way of life should be similar in each territory. I cannot tell you what kind of process we will be following through with this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I noted that the minister and the finance minister of the federal government said that this is a good start and increase our competitiveness in attracting and retaining skilled workers to the North. I think the focus should be on helping people who are living here now and living here permanently. So I hope that he takes that into consideration when he's meeting with his northern colleagues.

I think a 50 percent increase would cost the federal government \$60 million in tax revenue. To them, that's not very much. It would be a big boost to the North if we could get a \$60 million tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, further in the budget speech yesterday, the federal government announced the creation of a new Crown corporation called PPP Canada Inc. He says it's their first Public, Private, and Partnership office. They will be using P3s.

Mr. Speaker, I have been asking the Minister of Finance for four years what the status is of the Government of Nunavut's P3 policy. I wonder if the minister could tell us today what the status is of the P3 policy and if he could table it in this session. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Member Peterson. Minister of Finance, Minister Tapardjuk.

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): The P3 policy is very hard to deal with. We will bring out the policy in 2008 but we are still working on it. Once it's completed, we will be presenting the policy before the end of the fiscal year. We would like to table that policy, and after it has been approved by Cabinet, we will be able to provide you with that policy. 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. I think I have heard that before three, or four, or five times now that we're going to get it. I'll probably ask more questions in this session on that.

Also in the federal minister of finance's budget, he mentioned the extension of the Gas Tax Fund, a permanent extension of the Tax Gas Fund which reached \$2 billion per year in 2009-2010. I had a little chuckle last night when I was reading it and they're said, "municipalities large and small from coast to coast," but they forgot the third coast, there's a coast to coast to coast. Whoever the speechwriters are should remember these things.

So I'm wondering, based on \$2 billion per year, if the Minister of Finance can tell us exactly how much Nunavut would receive every year on the Gas Tax Fund if the fund becomes permanent. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): I will take the question as notice. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. The minister will get back to you. Oral Questions. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

#### **Question 423 – 2(4): Baker Lake Dock**

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

This past summer, it was clear that the dock is too small in Baker Lake and there were about 60 barges that came in for the mining companies and one of the barges was too big, so they had to unload it and put it onto the smaller barges. I wonder if the Department of Economic Development and Transportation was informed that it was a safety hazard and has anything been considered to make improvements on this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Patterk Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I haven't been updated in regard to Baker Lake. Maybe the mine owners should be made responsible to accommodate if the communities with mining companies close to them encounter those kinds of problems. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year, the hamlet council identified that they wanted a bigger port on an urgent basis. What is the status on this? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Patterk Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said to the Member from Baker Lake, I haven't been updated with regards to Baker Lake. Maybe if we get some information from CGS, who is responsible for capital planning, then we will be able to consider this. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the Minister of Finance presented his Budget Address yesterday, he stated that the mining companies will benefit the communities and that the government will be able to assist with roads and such. I wonder if Economic Development has met with the mining companies on how they can work together in providing those infrastructures. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Patterk Netser**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The government has an agreement with the mines, in this case it's the mine near Baker Lake, the Development Partnership Agreement, and in that agreement, it states that the mining company has within 30 days to come up with a plan in terms of coming up with capital projects. In this case, it would be either the tank farm or a docking facility for the community of Baker Lake.

I have asked my staff if they have come forward with any of the plans that I'm just mentioning, and to date, I haven't received anything from them, but I'll follow-up with my staff and see what these companies have said so far. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Simailak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, this has to be dealt with quickly in Baker Lake and it should be treated on an urgent basis because the mining companies are starting to operate. I wonder if the minister can meet with the Hamlet

Council of Baker Lake and other organizations so that this can proceed smoothly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Patterk Netser:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would love to sit down with the Hamlet Council of Baker Lake along with the mining companies that are working over in that region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### **Question 424 – 2(4): Update on Air Quality at Sanikiluaq School**

**Mr. Kattuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) My question is directed to the Minister of Community and Government Services. She probably recalls last week when I asked the Minister of Education questions with regards to our school in Sanikiluaq that has been closed for too many days and the departmental officials were in our community about two weeks ago.

I wonder if the minister can update this House on what they have done to eliminate the foul odour in the school. Can the minister update me on exactly what they will be doing to the school in my constituency? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My apologies; I didn't hear his question. I wonder if he could repeat his question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Kattuk, can you repeat your question? Mr. Kattuk.

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Maybe I'll ask a different question.

The minister probably recalls that I raised some questions with the Minister of Education about our school in Sanikiluaq. Our school has been closed for too many days because of the foul odour and the departmental officials of Community and Government Services were in Sanikiluaq about two weeks ago. Can the minister update me on what has been done or what they will be doing to remedy the problem there? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for posing that question.

My officials are still working on this. So far, from what I have heard, my officials went down to the community and they were going to update me and give me a report. From what I understand, they were working on the problem and I haven't heard if they have closed the school again but they did a very thorough inspection. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the minister tell me when she expects to deal with this study? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There were a number of people that went down and they will have to compile the findings. In total, there were eight different people from Iqaluit and Ottawa, and there were two specialists that came in.

They suspect that it was the furnace that may have caused the foul odour, but once I get more information, I will definitely inform my colleague. To date, I haven't heard anything else on what plans they have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The hamlet council made a motion regarding that. When they were talking about the motion they made, the officials that went down to investigate and the local people that are working there had different opinions. They couldn't agree with what exactly caused the odour. I wonder if the minister can tell her officials to expedite their efforts of resolving this problem. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would be more than happy to hear from the hamlet council and I am waiting for their report.

My staff has not reported to me yet and I will follow-up on this to see what the situation is now. I understand the urgency of this, so I will definitely ask my staff to update me on the status of this and I will inform the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I tabled the motion that the hamlet council made in the Assembly. I will be waiting to hear from the minister and I will be available if she wants to work with me. It's not a question; it's just a comment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. That was just comment. Oral Questions. Member for Akulliq, Mr. Mapsalak.

**Question 425 – 2(4): Renovation of Older Housing Units**

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, every year, though I'm sure there are not as many as the years go by, there are rental housing units in the communities that are owned and operated by the Nunavut Housing Corporation and they are getting extremely old.

My question to the minister is: how old do the rental units have to be before they are renovated or replaced? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Netser.

**Hon. Patterk Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The houses that are owned and operated by the Nunavut Housing Corporation are renovated every year, but I don't know exactly how many years have to go by before they renovated or replaced. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure it's not only in the communities that I represent, but there are some houses that are so old that they are becoming safety hazards.

After the cold spells this winter, there have been frozen pipes and doors that weren't keeping the cold out. Some of these houses were built in the 1960s. How many times can you renovate a house before it is replaced? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Netser.

**Hon. Patterk Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We can only do so many renovations with the amount of funding we get from the federal government. We have received \$200 million from the federal government through the Housing Trust Fund so that we could get rid of the old units and build new ones. At this point, there's not much we can do because of the shortage of funds. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As there are some units that are in need of emergency repair, does the minister know how many rental units are going to be renovated and how much money is allotted for those renovations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Netser.

**Hon. Patterk Netser**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My understanding is that, annually, there's a program for renovating these older houses all across the territory, but I'll have to confirm with the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Could the minister provide me with the number of houses that need renovations or how many houses they anticipate they will need to renovate this year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Netser.

**Hon. Patterk Netser** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes.

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

**Question 426 – 2(4): Status of Disaster Assistance Policy for the Government of Nunavut**

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services.

As the minister is aware, prior to division in 1999, the Government of the Northwest Territories had a formal Disaster Assistance Policy. This policy enabled the government to provide financial assistance to community governments, small businesses or residents who suffered damage as a result of a disaster.

It is my understanding that the GN's own Disaster Assistance Policy expired in 2001. Can the minister indicate to the House today the current status of her department's efforts to develop a new Disaster Assistance Policy for Nunavut? (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our department has been continually working on the disaster policy with the federal government. To date, we're still working on the framework. Due to it being such a huge task, we haven't completed it yet.

We do have something for the communities, but we're still working on the Disaster Assistance Policy. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my understanding that this issue was scheduled to be discussed at a meeting of the Nunavut Association of Municipal Administrators held in Iqaluit last September. Can the minister indicate to the House today what feedback her department received on this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The regions are working on this issue along with the hamlets and the Nunavut Association of Municipalities. I had asked them to set up a report and once it's completed, I will table it in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister. As you probably know, there might have been some loss of property or other items in Rankin Inlet after the recent disaster. Can the minister indicate to me what financial assistance may be made to residents and businesses in Rankin Inlet that have suffered damage or financial losses as a result of the recent state of emergency in Rankin Inlet? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a brief note, there are slight differences. There is a Natural Disaster Fund, where we have to go through the federal government. The one in Rankin Inlet was a local emergency and I'm sure that there has been damage or financial loss.

If there are any claims, they can submit them to Community and Government Services, and again, in the community, we set up an Emergency Preparedness Plan and it also goes



through the *Emergency Measures Act* that was passed in November 2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you. In the fall we just dealt with Bill 12, and as I stated earlier, we had a Disaster Assistance Policy under the Government of the Northwest Territories but it expired in 2001, so I would like to ask my final question to the minister.

As the minister will recall, the Legislative Assembly recently passed Bill 12, Nunavut's new *Emergency Measures Act*. Can the minister indicate to me today the status of bringing forward new regulations under the Act? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We are still reviewing the *Emergency Measures Act* and I'm sure that it will be coming back. There is a process that we have to go through in bringing up new regulations and once they're ready, we'll make sure that the copies are available. Thank you.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Minister. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit Centre, Mr. Tootoo.

#### **Question 427 – 2(4): \$89.1 Million Contingency Fund**

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker in the minister's Budget Address, he indicated that he was pleased to announce that for 2008-09, the government expects a \$4.5 million surplus and he indicated that while this was good news, he cautioned us that as we pass important legislation in this upcoming fiscal year, we will need to set aside monies for implementation.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Education had indicated that the proposed *Education Act* would cost \$14 million.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance: if the *Education Act* was passed, would that then change the \$4.5 million surplus into a roughly \$10 million deficit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have \$89 million that is in the contingency plan and we don't know exactly what is going to happen at this point. We will have to wait until the bills are enacted before we can make any assumptions.

We won't go into a deficit; we have a contingency plan should those bills be enacted in the House for their implementation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Tootoo**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know I had asked earlier during the session what that \$89.1 million contingency was, and in his statement, he said that they have also set aside that contingency amount of \$89.1 million, but when I read, "I caution members, as we pass important legislation this upcoming fiscal year, we will need to set aside monies for implementation."

I would have read that as that \$89 million was set aside already and his comments, "We will need to set aside monies for implementation," that that money had not yet been set aside. Can the minister confirm then that monies have been set aside for legislation and they are included in that \$89.1 million contingency money? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This \$89 million is for three purposes. One is for the implementation of the bills and we have three on the table right now. Once those are enacted, the monies for the implementation will come out of the \$89 million. The second is that we have the contingency plan for emergency cases, for example, where one of our facilities should go up in flames. The third is again a contingency plan for employees and if the government has to deal with something to do with negotiations.

There are three specific purposes under the \$89.1 million contingency plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Tootoo**: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that and I'm still waiting for a list or a breakdown of the amounts for each area that he committed to providing to us earlier in this sitting.

Mr. Speaker, the minister indicated three pieces of legislation. I would assume that the other two are the two Language Bills that are before the committee. Can he indicate how much they have set aside for those two pieces of legislation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once the Languages Bills are passed, we have \$1.2 million from the Languages Commissioner's Office and we will provide \$6.9 million every year for teachers that will provide Inuktitut language training throughout Nunavut.

The government employees will need to be trained to speak in Inuktitut, so the \$23 million will be put in for training and for interpreters and translators.

The hamlets in the communities will also be receiving \$4.85 million every year to assist them for their council meetings and for their signs and everything that is pertaining to the offices and signs in the community. So we will be using approximately \$16 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that response. I just wanted to confirm then if my hearing was correct, if there's \$16 million for those two Language Bills and \$14 million for the *Education Act*; that's \$30 million for those two pieces of legislation. Is that correct? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Hon. Louis Tapardjuk** (interpretation): That \$16 million is for the Language Bills and not for the *Education Act*. The \$16 million that I mentioned, it states in the Act that it will be used for the people that are learning to speak Inuktitut, and \$6.9 million will be set aside for teacher training, ETEP.

That \$16 million would be for languages and we would not be using the funds all at one time for those things, but as we go along it will be obvious that we wouldn't be using the money right away but it's going to be a progress and those are the funds that we have set aside. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Members, Question Period is now over. 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. 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 Nattilik and Minister of Health and Social Services, Minister Aglukkaq.

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

**Tabled Document 184 – 2(4): Foster Parent Handbook**

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As per my commitment to the Members in Committee of the Whole, I'm tabling the Foster Parent Handbook which details requirements for foster homes and is provided as information to foster parents as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Please bring the document forward.

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. Bills 23, 24, and 25. Before we proceed to Committee of the Whole with Mr. Arreak as Chairman, we will take a 20-minute break.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:15 and Committee resumed at 15:42*

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

**Chairman** (Mr. Arreak): Welcome back, Members. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following items to deal with: Bills 23, 24, and 25. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Kattuk.

**Mr. Kattuk:** Mr. Chairman, we wish to continue with Bill 23 and the review of the Main Estimates for the Department of Health and Social Services. If time permits, we would commence with the review of the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Are we in agreement we continue 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. Minister Aglukkaq, do you have witnesses you would like to bring to the table?

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

**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.

(interpretation ends) Welcome back, Minister. For the record, 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:** Thank you, Minister. We're on page H-6 of Health and Social Services. Branch Summary. Public Health. Are there any questions on this page? There being none, Public Health. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$6,637,000. Does the committee agree?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Page H-7. Branch Summary. Health and Social Services. Treatment. Mr. Mapsalak.

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a fairly short question to this section and I'm sure my colleagues will also have questions.

Mr. Chairman, we are all aware that, particularly in our constituencies, the people we represent come to voice their concerns, especially with regards to medical travel patients and people that are going to southern hospitals from their home communities.

In the Kivalliq region, as an example, in Repulse Bay, medical travel patients have many stops in a number of communities before actually arriving in Winnipeg and sometimes they arrive in Winnipeg late at night, even after midnight. So I would like to ask a question in this regard.

When there is a person who is very sick and they're travelling on milk runs, they either have to stop in all or most of these communities: Coral Harbour, Rankin Inlet, Churchill, and Thompson; until they finally arrive in Winnipeg, Manitoba. If the plane experiences any issues, or if it goes mechanical, they end up having to stay overnight at one of the stops along the way. I would like to ask the minister this question: is there a poster posted at the airports, along with phone numbers where they can call in case of emergencies if they require assistance at all of those scheduled stops? This is my first question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do know, in centres where we refer our clients, there are signs in the airports for phone numbers, but every other stop, I'm not aware of that. I would have to check that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank the minister for her response. We have been experiencing problems with this issue with more than one patient. When the plane cannot make it, they have to leave some patients behind at one of those stops and they get into a predicament because they don't know who to call when this happens, especially in Thompson, Manitoba, because that's one of the communities that the planes stop in.

I don't think there is even anything in Churchill, Manitoba. If a patient got stuck on their way or coming back from the hospital, there's absolutely nothing for them. They don't know where to call and there's no telephone numbers provided. Some patients can't even afford to make the phone call when they get into that situation and they don't know what to do. They get totally confused because they're not in their home community.

Perhaps you should provide a toll-free number where the patients can call when they get stuck and don't know where to go. If there's no such thing at those stops, would she be able to provide them with that? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I forgot to mention earlier in my response; we now have handbooks for every person that is travelling on medical travel under the revised Client Travel Guidelines that outline information for the patient that is travelling. I believe there are phone numbers in that booklet; I had them at my desk this week but they must be upstairs.

So I don't know if there's a 1-800 number there or not, but there are contact numbers for everyone who is travelling from the Baffin, Kitikmeot, and Kivalliq that is given to every patient that goes out. It also explains what to expect as a patient from the services provided by the Department of Health and/or by the boarding homes. So there is that booklet.

I also tabled not the final print of it but the actual policy in the House and the new formatted version is also available. I forgot to mention that earlier. I'll double-check to see in the booklet if there are those 1-800 numbers as you suggested. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank the minister. It would be beneficial if you could provide a toll-free number in their handbook.

Perhaps I'll ask another question. If patients go down on medical travel and the plane goes mechanical or is grounded for any other reason, regardless of the airline, do patients

pay for their own accommodations when they are unable to continue their travel or does the Department of Health and Social Services cover those costs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are two responses to that. In cases where a person is travelling and a flight goes mechanical en route, normally, the airlines would cover the hotels for those travelling passengers. Once they are able to travel again, they're on that flight to continue on or they're rebooked on a different flight to go.

In cases where your boarding pass, when you travel, like everyone else, if it's stamped that you may not land because of weather and you land at the alternate, then we would cover that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank the minister. Does the department inform the patients when that occurs, or are patients informed prior to them having to stay in a community? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: In cases where it's due to weather at the airport, yes, they're advised as they board the plane and that's when they stamp your boarding pass.

In cases where it's unexpected mechanical, of course, the airlines would then have to contact all of the passengers on the plane of the delays and so on when it occurs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll talk a bit about billeting. I know the boarding homes are provided with 1-800 numbers but I don't think they are provided that information on their way back. Nowadays, we use computers to talk with each other and it's free when they have an email account because they can email each other. Do they provide Internet services in the boarding homes? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding hospitals providing Internet services, I don't have an answer for that.

I do know, in some boarding homes, that they have taken the initiative to install Internet and that's the contract service providers that do that on their own initiative as far as I know. I think that there's one that I am aware of. I don't know if they all have Internet access in every boarding home and those are contracted services. I would have to contact the service providers to find that out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also would like to thank the minister. This is my last question. The Internet service is very beneficial and is in the interest of the public. The patients provide information to their family members using the Internet, so it's being used widely. Maybe the minister can consult with the boarding homes to see if they can provide wireless Internet services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will review the contracts and see if that can be included in the new contracts. As well, we'll find out which boarding homes presently provide that service and get that information to the member. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman**: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. We're on page H-7. I have no more names. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you. I have questions in regard to this page. Sometimes we don't really understand Inuktitut but my question is in regard to medical treatment.

They have a priority in the business plan on page H-22. Their first priority for this coming year is "To increase physician recruitment" in the department. I would like to ask the minister how they will proceed with their priority to increase physician recruitment in the Kivalliq region. How will this occur? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will have the deputy minister respond to that as part of the overall implementation plan for the Kivalliq region. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Campbell**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we have stated earlier in the presentations, we do have the implementation plans approved now for the three regional facilities in Nunavut. As part of that process, there's going to be recruitment of health professionals to the regional centres. We continue to be challenged in recruiting for doctors like we do



with nurses, so we'll continue to provide strategies to attract doctors. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, it would be ideal if we can be informed about the regions, not just the headquarters or not just in the department's recruitment plan, but if you can make the copies available for recruitment plans in the communities.

I believe that the municipalities have to be informed about the strategies. Due to a lack of consultation with the municipalities, the problems increase. Perhaps, you can change the way in which you provide information, such as coming up with a plan so that we don't work in a centralized fashion. As long as the ministers know and the deputy ministers know, (interpretation ends) what about the rest of the population? (interpretation) That centralization has to stop.

For that reason, the minister or your deputy can elaborate to us about their first priority, "To increase physician recruitment," so that the public or the communities can be better informed about the plans. So I was wondering if you could provide that strategy to us. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The implementation plan for the three facilities; we had just finalized that in early February and I will commit to having information sessions at the municipality level through our executive directors in the regions. The three directors in the regions have been working really hard to put the plan together that outlines what services will be in place, what resources would be needed, and what kind of services would this result in with the expanded services or expanded facilities.

So I agree with the member. I will commit to having a communication strategy established on the implementation of that plan amongst the other programs that we have also in place. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. Yes, I appreciate that response. I think it's critically important that we begin to understand. I'm not a 100 percent sure whether or not the local health committees in communities have any role in that, but if they do have any role, then it is also important to communicate with them. Someone would have to communicate that responsibility to pass that information on to local communities; I will not get involved in that one.

The second point that I wanted to address is that, and I alluded to it earlier in my opening comments, the government appears to enjoy this very centralized administration of whatever - health delivery or even medical.

I have tried and tried to ask the minister, in my comments a few weeks ago, that: would it not be timely now to assess whether or not the administrators should be considered for each region and separate politics from delivery so that the health centres as well as hospitals would have a more independent administrator who looks after all the concerns of the medical profession and nurses, so that we, in the regions, don't interfere with their work when there are public complaints and so on?

I wonder if the minister or her deputy could explain whether or not the current system is working or not. To some of us, it appears to be one of our biggest weaknesses because we haven't modernized it to today's reality. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There's always room for improvement in the delivery of any program in the territory.

Presently with Health, I would say the opposite, that we're very highly decentralized. We have facilities and services in every community - there are 25 communities - and then we have three regional centres that deliver those programs with the support from each region - Cambridge Bay, Rankin Inlet, and Pangnirtung for the Baffin - and so on. So that was a model that was approved through NIC, and so on, in those days and the one that is in place.

In terms of centralized, headquarters is in the area of policy and we try and deliver programs at the community and regional levels. That's the only way we can deliver our programs and services.

Perhaps, I do not understand exactly what the member refers to in terms of centralized services but I believe Health and Social Services is very decentralized in its services at the community level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. I believe my point, made more than once, has been quite clear. I'm not at all asking questions about the facilities as they are because medical facilities and treatment centres are required anywhere.

What I'm talking about is decision making and management of health and medical in terms of the way in which who decides, and even if we have a complaint right now, if the complaint were to come in that a medical patient is coming out and didn't get on the plane, it could easily get political because we don't have any health administrators or local concerns of health centres in the smaller communities. They have problems.

The issues can go directly to the deputy minister in a very short time when it shouldn't even be so. That should be addressed, in my opinion, by having a better system and by having arms length health administrators in the regions. I'm not asking for a response immediately but it's worth thinking about so we depoliticize the role of the administrator who would deal directly with the nursing profession concerns and day-to-day issues, and we, as politicians, deal with the policy issues.

I gave an example the other day; the minute I email the director in the region, he won't respond to me. Why? And, I need the response immediately. So that's the kind of thing I'm asking.

Would it be possible to have a review, or at least an exercise go on, to see whether or not we can improve the efficiency of administration and response to serve not only our politicians but nurses and physicians as well as the local concerns? (interpretation) That's all. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will commit to reviewing what he has suggested to us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. The second priority that you have in there for 2008-09 is to "Develop and implement a Nunavut-wide quality assurance framework." Can you explain to us exactly what that means? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll have my deputy minister respond to that. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Campbell.

**Mr. Campbell** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) When we talk about quality assurance, we're talking about, first of all, the level of service that the hospitals, the regional health centres, and the community health centres provide, and the standards of those facilities and the standards of the programs and services that are delivered at the regional health centres as well as the hospital here. We're talking about accreditation of the hospital here primarily over the next year - the Qikiqtani General Hospital.

So when we talk about quality assurance, we're talking about making sure that our standards are being met across Nunavut. As I said as well yesterday, we have developed

the Programs and Standards Branch now of the department with an ADM responsible for that branch.

Part of our priority is to make sure that the policies and procedures that we have currently in place in the department are reviewed and revised according to national and territorial standards. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. I appreciate that. I addressed that issue sometime ago; I think it was last year and I'm not sure whether the current deputy minister was there then. By the fact that when it deals with the issue of health services accreditation, I believe for the Baffin region, this local regional hospital here is the only one that is subject to that issue, but it is a voluntary service provided by the professions in Canada.

So I'm wondering why a voluntary initiative like that would have to involve so much of the department's concern when they, in fact, could continue the volunteer service, unless you have plans to expand it to the other two regions. Is that the case as well? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The accreditation, the member is correct; it is a volunteer service that we participate in and it sets standards that are recognized across Canada. For us to participate in that is a method of measuring where we stand as it relates to other jurisdictions in the various standards identified in the accreditation process.

Some of the initiatives within that also impact our recruitment. There are some physicians that would prefer to work in hospitals that have been accredited, and so on, so there's some merit to it in that way as well.

As part of the whole Accreditation Working Group and our partnership with the Canadian Accreditation Organization, we're also looking at passing that assessment. The territorial quality assurance framework is being developed to extend that to our health centres in Nunavut once the accreditation review for here has been completed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. I think we need to be quite cautious, that we do at least a fair accreditation program and we're going to get into that, to include other regions as well and other facilities.

I have another question with respect to the department's responsibility. We have heard a number of unexpected deaths have occurred from region to region. I'm wondering whether or not the department has ever asked for the Coroner's Office to hold an inquest

when something of that nature occurred while under medical care, and if so, how often has that happened if they have any figures? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm going to speak to the process that we follow currently with the Department of Justice and the coroner's responsibility. The Premier is here, so he could correct me if I'm wrong in terms of the procedures that follow when a coroner is called in and the inquest.

In any situation where there is a sudden death, the coroner is involved. The coroner makes the determination when an autopsy is required, and so on, and then the Department of Justice process kicks in.

In any case, whether there's a death in our facility or outside hospital, in a home, and so on, the coroner is always involved to make those decisions on whether an inquest is required, or an autopsy is required, and so on. And, that falls under the coroner's legislation as per the Department of Justice. They're the ones that make that determination which is independent from us, from the Department of Health's programs and services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. I appreciate the response. If I read and understand the minister correctly, the procedure would apply under your department as such. There was one case here I read in the local papers that a student died unexpectedly and the Coroner's Office was asked to look into it quite quickly. So would this kind of procedure apply to other regions as well? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Perhaps, the Premier may want to elaborate on this. In any death, the coroner is involved and in the case, in any death, they're called in for any death, whether it's in a home, outside, in a hospital, and so on. That's the standard procedure that is followed when a death occurs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Yes, I understand all that. We do want to see the standards applied across the board and in the case of the local student's death that we read in the paper, the Coroner's Office was specifically asked for by officials or government representatives. So we just want to ensure that this procedure applies to any situation where unexpected deaths may occur, that there are no exceptions to following procedures. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, we don't govern by region; we govern by territory and we apply the rules as they are set out in legislation and as they're required by law.

I can't comment on one specific case. That is yet to be complete and it will hopefully be completed soon. When it's done, then we'll provide the report to the family and the people affected. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation) I would like to ask a question. Does the minister know how much money was spent in 2007 and 2008 for medical travel on scheduled flights to southern hospitals? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just going to pull the information. I will ask the deputy minister to go through that information. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Campbell** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Over the last number of years, starting from 2003-04, the actual expenditure for medical travel was \$31.6 million; for 2004-05, it was \$33.6 million; for 2005-06, it was \$38.9 million; for 2006-07, it was \$47.2 million; for 2007-08, the budget we're looking at, was \$4.0 million and we're projecting \$4.6 million as the projection for actual expenditures for 2007-08. This amount includes medevacs as well. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was asking without medevacs. Is there a breakdown for scheduled medical travel without medevacs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have that breakdown. I'll have to provide it to the member hopefully today or tomorrow. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When you're negotiating contracts with airlines, for example, scheduled airlines, do they commit to improving services from past experiences like trade offs? How do you determine how to give them contracts? Do they

actually say, "Here is what we think it's going to cost you on scheduled medical travel this year in comparison to last year and from the trends from the previous years"?

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The way I understand the process, it's more than just the cost associated. There are other factors that are looked into when we do the Request for Proposals from various service providers, just like we would set the standards for boarding homes; it would be the same for the airlines.

There is a criterion that's established in any Request for Proposals that's followed through the procurement process and cost is a factor, of course, but there are other pieces to that. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Canadian North was recently in the news lobbying for an increased share of the GN medical travel business. My friend from Iqaluit learned last night that Canadian North made an announcement that they have a small portion of the contract for medical travel. Can the minister then tell me what has been the GN's response to that? Does she have information of what portion has been going to Canadian North who has been recently lobbying? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can say, for the record, that there's more than one airline that lobbies the government for business. The other airlines do lobby my colleagues around the table as well for contracts.

In terms of the process that's in place right now, I can say that the Cabinet/FMB has finalized its decision last week. The file is still being worked on by CG&S as the department responsible for procurement and contract development.

The steps that would be taken, at that point in time, would be that CG&S Manager of Contracts would be then contacting the people that had submitted the proposals to communicate the decision and take it from there to formulate the contracts. At that point in time, we would be able to provide information to the public is how I understand the process to be.

My colleague, Minister Brown, can clarify if that process is correct or not as I just described it, but that's how I understand the procedure to be. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The FMB has finalized that already and I believe that the Request for Proposals also goes through the Department of Health. Does

she know about the amount now that after it has been finalized by the FMB? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The proportion of how the proposal has gone forward to FMB is correct. FMB has made a decision and it goes back to the Department of CG&S. I believe the Premier would like to respond to that question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In light of all the interest provided, I asked the appropriate departments to provide a methodology of what took place. It was fair and everybody was given an opportunity to provide their presentations. I'm sorry but that methodology is not done yet.

So we have acted as fair as can be to all airlines affected and I just want to provide that information for everybody. That information should be coming shortly but I just want to be clear to everyone that the process was open, transparent, and fair for everyone, and I want that methodology presented to the legislature. That's why it's taking a little longer than what we would like to see. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister and the Premier for that answer. I would like to switch a little bit to what Mr. Mapsalak was asking before about the information, and I think Mr. Curley did that too, that is provided to patients when they are going out on medical travel, especially those who are travelling on scheduled medical travel.

Did you say you have a brochure? For example, if a person is travelling from Pond Inlet to Iqaluit on their way to Ottawa, do you have a brochure for them here in Iqaluit and these are the numbers that you can call if you happen to land in Greenland or in Cambridge Bay from Pond Inlet? "Here are the numbers you can call." Is that the kind of brochure you are providing?

In addition to that question, Mr. Chairman: are these provided, for example, when a person is going to a medical centre or a hospital, that they are given an envelope from the doctor or the nurse in charge? Is that brochure included in that envelope as part of the travel package? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a handbook that's going to be going to every patient when they travel. This one here is for the Kivalliq but we have one



for the Baffin. This is a booklet that outlines information for airport arrivals, what to do regarding accommodations, what to do with the appointments, what support is there, and what procedure to follow when they're returning home. It also has the insurance programs and contact numbers if there are problems arising. This information will now go to every patient that is travelling, this is new, and it's starting April 1 this year.

For the first time, we have a book like this to hand out and we're also having information sessions with our service providers to explain the new policy to all the staff at the frontline that delivers this program so they all have an understanding of the changes that have been made and the handbook in assisting our patients in their travels and to mitigate any problems that they may encounter as a result of travel delays. It's specifically trying to mitigate problems encountered when travelling for medical.

I believe the first workshop took place in Rankin Inlet last week. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last question for that particular one is: do you have a prearranged agreement with all the hotels or accommodations in Nunavut to allow any patient who has been flown to an alternate community or became stuck... For example, Mr. Mapsalak was talking about the patients travelling on milk runs. They have to go through so many communities before they get to their destination. There's always a chance, and in fact, it happens quite a bit, that the plane gets stuck in one of those communities before their destination is reached.

Do you have a prearranged agreement with accommodation providers, like hotels, to allow medical patients to be placed with a room and meals, without any authorization, from Iqaluit, or Pangnirtung in this case, because they cannot be contacted at this particular hour; one or two in the morning? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do know that, through our boarding home, we have prearranged hotels set up in cases where there's an overflow of patients in the larger centres.

I don't know if we have prearranged hotels with all the other communities in between the point of departure to the point of destination but I will look into that to see what's in place. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll make it very simple this way: if a patient is travelling from Pond Inlet, or Resolute Bay, or Grise Fiord, the person from Grise Fiord

has stopped in Resolute Bay, Pond Inlet, Igloolik, Iqaluit, or maybe it's going through Clyde River then to Iqaluit.

If the person is stuck there, does he or she have a piece of paper saying, "If you ever get stuck in these communities accidentally due to a plane going mechanical, here is the contact and you can stay free for everything there, including transportation." That's my question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The information booklet that's provided provides contacts of the hotels and boarding homes that they're going to but I will look into that, I think that's reasonable, and see what we can set up as described by the member. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would appreciate that. It doesn't cost the government any money because it would just be a prearranged agreement; it doesn't cost you any money and you don't have to do any deposits.

I was asked many times last fall not to ask questions about the Pangnirtung Travel Office because we were talking about capital.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Now that we are on O&M, I would like to ask that question in the Committee of the Whole. Have you made any consideration or reconsideration of moving the Medical Travel Office for Baffin people, especially for Iqaluit patients, from Pangnirtung to Iqaluit? And, not just to Iqaluit but in the hospital so that when the patient is checked out, he or she goes to that office or to that lobby and says, "My doctor is done with me, so I'm ready to go home." Have you made the reconsideration or arrangement to make that easier for unfortunate patients? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the member for bringing that up. What we're looking at is examining just that, to address the ongoing concerns. I think there's enough time that has passed since the travel office has been established in the Baffin office.

I will commit to the member to examining and addressing those concerns, and report back to the member, hopefully, in the spring session in June, whatever findings we have and recommendations on addressing the ongoing concerns related to the office being located there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Arvaluk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That would be very good because it says right in the *Pinasuaqtavut* principles of the government that they will listen to people and they will respect the concerns of the citizens. I think that would be a great move and there's no embarrassment as much as the three time zones was.

>>*Laughter*

**Mr. Arvaluk:** I am looking forward to that positive announcement by the spring session. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's it.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. I think that was just a comment. Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sure that the minister and her officials are ready for this question. It's a serious concern that I raised during our standing committee review of the budget and that has to do with the amounts that are budgeted for medical travel. I think the supplementary appropriation for medical travel has been the only thing that has been more consistent than the Power Corporation asking for more money over the years.

>>*Laughter*

I have said over and over again, over the years as well, not only with this but in other areas within the budget: how realistic are these numbers? We're expected to vote on something that makes sense and is a realistic amount.

When I look at the amount that's budgeted for medical transportation, as worded in the business plan, it is \$43,959,000 for the 2008-09 year. If you look in the main estimates for the 2006-07 year, their actual expenditures were \$49,240,000. They put in a main estimates amount, and one thing I'm glad we're finally seeing is actual expenditures in the budget because, in the past, all we have seen is budgeted amounts or revised budgeted amounts; we never see what was actually spent.

My serious concern is how the heck can the department expect... they just acknowledged today that they have entered into a new contract, which I'm sure these numbers in the 2006-07 year are from a three-year-old price and a three-year-old contract.

We are just entering into a new contract just after increasing aviation fuel and all those other costs, the heating costs; everything is going to up for those airlines that are operating in Nunavut. How can they realistically expect to spend, if you look at the main estimate amount, \$3 million less than they actually spent in 2006-07 that they plan on spending next year? It just doesn't make any logical sense for me. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you. Could the member ask the question again? Thank you. Sorry.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have pointed it out, as I'm sure the minister will recall, in standing committee that I believe the number that we have here for medical travel is not an accurate number.

The overall expenditures that they're planning for the 2008-09 year is \$46,241,000; in 2006-07, they spent \$49 million - \$3 million more two years ago than on an old contract. We're going to be going into this year with a new contract with a more open client travel policy. How can she expect us to look at this and consider that an accurate number to be voting on in this budget? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For 2008-09, we're projecting \$46,241,000 for this fiscal year. I understand the member's questions and concerns related to the previous year's Supplementary Bills requesting additional funding to cover medical travel. It's been a challenging area to manage as medical travel and medevacs are hard to control. It's very difficult to predict illnesses that will require the transporting of patients, and so on, so we have tried to address the issue around projections and tracking.

I can say though, since the last year or two, we've had put in place systems that can better track for us, by month, where we are at in terms of expenditures with our new medical travel budget tracking system within the department. The figures that we're working with are accurate to the end of March 31, as an example, as of this month, they're data entered and we have a better projection tool around that.

The other area that we have included in the last few years is to put forward some contingency to the Government of Nunavut around fuel price increases that may impact medical travel, which, in the past, were never part of the Government of Nunavut's overall contingency when we were dealing with fuel price increases.

So the information before us is the best information that we have gone forward to try and project the expenditures for medical travel for scheduled and as well for medevacs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I still can't see how that's an accurate number. How are we going to spend \$3 million less next year than we actually spent two years ago?

I mentioned that I as serious when I mentioned it in standing committee, and obviously, it just went in one ear and out the other. That is not an accurate, realistic number to have there. Last year, for 2007-08, you had \$34,794,000. Do you know where you're at right now or what you're projecting to finish off with for the 2007-08 year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Yes, I'll have the deputy respond to this current situation. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Campbell.

**Mr. Campbell** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We fully appreciate the observation that's been made by the member. We are always dealing with projections for these expenditures. As the minister said, medical travel is an area that's very unpredictable. As I said earlier, for 2006-07, the actual expenditure was \$47.2 million. For 2007-08, we're projecting an actual expenditure of \$46.5 million.

What we're trying to do as a department is, at the same time, do some financial management processes in the department where we're reviewing most of the travel as they occur and trying to minimize some of the other expenses that we incur as a department.

So we do have an expenditure management initiative on the go in the department and we've had that implemented since May of last year. We have to try and play a balance between trying to control our expenditures and trying to balance the overall budget as a department. I appreciate that there are going to be some increases in fuel prices as well.

The budget that we have of \$43 million projected for medical travel may not be enough for next year. I can say that now but I don't know that; maybe the budget will come in under. I'm not sure what that's going to entail. This is our best guess right now given the circumstance that we have as a department and given some of the projections that we have made internally as a department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that these are just projections but I just want to know if I heard Mr. Campbell correctly. For 2007-08, they're projecting \$46 million. Is that what I heard? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's correct.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know I can appreciate Mr. Campbell's comments when they're trying to work within their budgets but I think, when they come back to the Assembly saying, "We don't have enough for medical travel," they know already.

They're budgeting \$3 million less than they're actually looking at spending for next year, than they're actually spending this year. To me, that's not an accurate reflection and that's not a best guess. You know darn well that it's going to come in way over that. To live within the targets of the budget, targets that the department has to work with, they say, "Okay. Well, let's just put it at this and then it allows us to do other things." This is not a realistic number.

If it's already \$3 million, or just over \$2 million, they're looking at \$46 million for 2007-08 and they've got just under \$44 million for 2008-09, and again, the fact that the \$46 million that they're looking at for the 2007-08 is based on a three-year-old price off of a three-year-old contract and we're going into 2008-09 year with a new contract, I imagine that it would be silly to think that it would be a lower price after all the increased costs to the airlines and everyone else, that I don't know how they can even put forward a number like that that's less and expect us to buy it. I don't buy it.

I think they should go back, and that's what I suggested during the standing committee, and come back with a realistic number there. Now, you know, obviously, what the prices of the new contract are going to be. Use that and come back with a more accurate number in there. To me, that's not an accurate number, and as I have said for years, we should be getting accurate information in front of us. That's not accurate.

You're already saying, "Well, we're going to budget just over \$2 million less than what we're actually looking at spending the year before." Every year, it has gone up. For the 2007-08, you said \$46 million; you had budgeted \$34 million. I can't support or agree with a plugged number; just a number in there to work within to make it look like the department is within their targets knowing full well that they're going to go over that.

I would like to make a more informed decision. If other things got to go because of that, then, you know... We know that whenever they come forward to the Assembly saying, "We need more money for medical travel," that they're not going to get said no to. They have done that over, and over, and over again, so I can't support that.

I would like to request that the minister take this back and come back with a more realistic number in there for medical travel because that's a totally unrealistic and, if we could use the term, bogus number that they have in there. It's already \$2.1 million less than they're planning to spend this year.

So would the minister do that: take this budget back and come back with a realistic number for medical travel? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you. I appreciate the member's concerns and frustrations around this file. I share that concern too. To try and accurately predict or to accurately forecast medical travel would be asking me to adequately forecast the number of people I'm going to have to send out because they got sick. They are directly tied together.

It's very difficult to predict the number of medevacs we're going to issue and the number of sick people we're going to send. It's directly tied into the money and it's hard to predict; the two go hand in hand. It's very difficult and we try our best.

I can say though that 2007-08, our projection for medical travel is what the actual is, the \$46 million area. What we were asked to do at that time was to come back at a later date and we're given a partial of what we requested. So we are getting pretty close to projecting actuals.

The actual amount that we had requested in 2007-08 was around \$46 million, but given that we were developing our tracking system and our reporting, and so on, we were asked to come back at a later time to FMB, which is what we have done this year; I can say that. The information before us, I can say, is as accurate as we can predict to today.

The other decisions around the contracts, we can speak to more of those once they are finalized without getting into the details, but we anticipate there will be some savings in those contracts. I can't get into that at this point in time because those are not complete, and as the Premier stated, that information will be coming forward to the members. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I still can't see... like I know in the business plan, it shows, for Medical Transportation, \$34,794,000 for 2007-08 and she said they're coming in at \$46 million. I know in the main estimates here, it says the revised amount for 2007-08 was \$44 million; that's still less money than they're planning to spend.

I know you can't have a crystal ball and determine exactly how much is going to be there, but just take a look at the numbers over the years, look at the numbers every year; it's always way over. You shouldn't be coming forward with amounts that have never been less than what's budgeted or what's spent the previous year.

I don't see how they could think that this is a realistic number; we know it's not. It's obvious they don't care if they're going to put it through like that anyways because it was brought forward and brought to their attention during our standing committee review.

Mr. Chairman, with that, I would like to move that this budget be deferred until they come back with a more accurate number for their medical travel. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. The motion is in order. However, I will distribute a copy of the motion and we will take a five-minute break before we do that.

*>>Committee recessed at 16:56 and resumed at 17:24*

**Chairman:** Welcome back, Members. Mr. Tootoo, could you please read your motion again for the benefit of all members.

**Committee Motion 012 – 2(4): Deferral of Consideration of the 2008-2009 Main Estimates of the Department of Health and Social Services**

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Very simply, Mr. Chairman, my motion was that I move to defer the Department of Health and Social Services budget. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. The motion is in order. Before we proceed with the debate on the motion, I have a few comments to make as to procedures.

Every member has the right to speak once to the motion for a total of 20 minutes. The mover of the motion speaks first. The mover of the motion has the right to the last reply which closes debate. To the motion. Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that when we're looking at these budgets, all members expect them to be as accurate as possible.

I think, if you take a look at the historical numbers for medical travel, the fact that they're having a more open Client Travel Policy kicking into force, the numbers that we have looked at in past years up until this year have been based on a three-year-old contract now and it's also the prices that drove those numbers to where they are, are three years old. We're starting this year with a new contract, and given all the increases over the last couple of years, I can't imagine that the costs are going to go down on that.

I'm just asking that it be deferred and for the department to come back with a more accurate projection. I know that it is a projection; it isn't an easy thing to nail down, but I really believe, in this case, it is way under what it should be and as a result of that, given the historical numbers and everything else, I can't vote on something that I don't think is correct.

So based on that, I would like for them to come back with a more accurate projection, given the historical data and the new information that they have now, with a number more reflective of what it should be. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. To the motion. Mr. Premier.



**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I'm a little bit puzzled by the motion. We're being asked to predetermine how many people will be sick this coming year. That's a very difficult question to answer for anyone because none of us know how many people will be sick this coming year.

We're basing our numbers on last year's figures. My colleague for Iqaluit Centre is saying that the figures always go up. If we look at the actual figures in 2006-07, we were at about \$47 million for medical travel. This coming year, we're forecasting it at \$46 million. They may go down by the looks of it and these are actuals for this coming year. So we can only base it on how much we have spent in the past year.

For us to predetermine that there'll be more people sick this coming year is not a nice way to think of setting budgets. We're hoping there will be less as they have been sometimes in some given years, and to ask us to just pick a number out of the air is not very good forecasting; we're trying to base our figures on budgeted items in the past year. In the unfortunate event that we do go over this figure that we based on this past year's numbers, we will go back to FMB, we will go back to this House, and explain why went over the figures and justify them in this House.

Also, Mr. Chairman, there is an audit taking place of the entire Department of Health which will look at what better ways that we can manage our expenses in this given department, including medical travel. So we're trying to find better ways of managing these dollars, and to try and say that there will be more sick people next year is not a very good way to manage a budget. We're hoping there will be less and we're trying to find ways to reduce our costs. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Okalik. Mr. Mapsalak.

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regards to the Premier's comment, we don't know if the patients will increase and not all patients leave their home community for treatment.

The population of Nunavut is increasing and the number of young children and parents are increasing. Also, in Repulse Bay, when they have premature babies, they have to send them out. Our population is not decreasing. The births are increasing annually, not just for the community but for the whole of Nunavut.

Although we have regional hospitals where they can give birth in Rankin Inlet, in Cambridge Bay, and in Iqaluit, other communities don't have hospitals. Currently, I have not heard anything about giving birth. Some pregnant women are sent out because of the complications they might have when they're delivering their baby, so they have to be sent out.

All the communities cannot have birthing centres, and for that reason, I don't think the motion is saying there are going to be more sick people. I think what we're saying is the population is growing at a very fast rate.

For that reason, I agree and I don't expect the costs to go down because patients have to leave their communities for treatment. I just wanted to explain that further and I am in support of the motion. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. To the motion. Mr. Arvaluk.

**Mr. Arvaluk** (interpretation): I just have a very brief comment to make in support the motion.

For example, the *Midwifery Act*, I can't remember the bill number, is not coming into force right away because there will be some training involved. There will be a lot of expectant mothers who will be leaving their communities and that's the reason why the amount will not decrease even after the audit is completed. While auditors are reviewing the information, patients will continue leaving the communities.

If I told my father where I was going to go caribou hunting and he asked me how much gas I've got, and I told him, "Yes, I bought 20 gallons of gas," he would ask, "When was the last time you were out with only 20 gallons of gas for two weeks?" He would ask me right away because he knew that I didn't have enough.

What was mentioned earlier about women who go to hospitals to give birth; they are not sick. I agree with the Premier that we don't want to say that there will be more sick people but there are lots of women who will need to deliver babies and they will need to leave their communities because they don't give birth in their communities.

The purpose of the motion is not to take this off; we just want this to be looked at carefully so we can tell our constituents what the reasons are. I don't want to have to say that I don't know and that I don't know why it's less than what it was previously, so this needs to be reviewed carefully. Maybe if we are provided with substantiation sheets and given an explanation, such as, "It's going to remain the same given these reasons. Please take a look."

So at this time, I will support the motion to defer the budget until we get substantiation sheets or something giving us reasons to justify that amount. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. (interpretation ends) I have no more names. Ms. Aglukkaq.

**Hon. Leona Aglukkaq:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I'll just repeat what I had said. It's an area that's very difficult to predict. It's very difficult to predict or find someone who can actually predict the number of people that will be sick in Nunavut in the coming year.

Historically, we have been quite accurate in some of the budgets over the years and I'll use 2003-04 as an example. We had budgeted \$32 million but we actually spent \$31

million. In 2004-05, we budgeted \$33.8 million and we were actually at \$33.6 million. So there are areas where it was actually lower. Where we have gone up, a lot of it relates to cases and some related to fuel price increases.

So there are some factors that added to the difficulty of actually predicting number of people that would be ill and then there are other factors outside treating patients that we had to deal with resulting in supplementary appropriations that went before this House. A lot of effort has gone into trying to address this issue within the department, including the clarity within the travel policy, consistency in the application, and the whole issue about escorts. The new policy will become effective April 1 of this year.

The Public Health Strategy, for the very first time in this government, we have a policy direction which drives initiatives to keeping people well and not focusing on treatment all the time but rather trying to prevent people from getting sick. So that's long-term but we want to see some results as well. The other area is a decision around the medical travel contract; we're anticipating some changes around that.

Taking us to this fiscal year, 2007-08, we projected that we would spend \$46 million. The amount that we're at right now is \$46 million, so our projections are very accurate to today. We're basing this year's budget on the actuals of 2007-08. They're the same. So what we're proposing to you today is to approve the line item based on the best information we have available to us, which are the projections for the year end figures for this year. That's what we're asking you to approve.

To go back and hold off on this budget and to say, "Come up with something more accurate," that's as accurate as we can get today. That's the best information before us. To go beyond that, you're saying, "Project how many people are going to be sick," then I'm making up numbers at that point. Anything that's beyond what we're proposing is what you're accepting now. What we're saying is this is what we know we have spent and this is what we're asking for. To go beyond that, I'm basically guessing a figure from the air to get it through, and that's what we're dealing with right now.

So what we're saying now is this is the best information we have. Deferring this department's budget on this line item is not going to change the information before us. We're still going to be working with the same information, which is our year end figures from last year; it's the same. To go beyond the figures would be inventing information. So that's the challenge you're asking us to do.

The other part is we have been working with the Auditor General of Canada. Based on the recommendations from this House, we're working with her and the area they're auditing is medical travel. We're waiting for her too, as well, to come forward with recommendations on how we can better improve the delivery of this program. But, there are a number of initiatives we have undertaken to better manage this budget by updating the policy, clarifying the policy, training our staff, adding the audit, and putting in the systems for tracking our medical travel.

I can say the Department of Health now has a data entry system for medical travel that will tell you to today how much we have spent, to February 26. That's how accurate it is now; it's not a made up number. So the numbers that we are putting before you is the closest to what we spent last year and we're working with that figure today. Anything beyond that, I can't invent another figure which is what I think I'm being asked to do, to come up with another figure. The best information we have is what created this figure.

In any areas, we will continue to try and put initiatives in place to save money. My big goal to try and address is to reinvest some of this money that we have spent on airline tickets before we even treat sick people in programs that actually help prevent illness down the road is the ultimate goal with the Public Health Strategy that we have implemented.

With that, I don't support this motion and I don't believe this motion, in deferring, is going to make a difference in the information that we have to come forward to you with. That's the actual information we have, which is what we have shared with you today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Aglukkaq. To the motion. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you. (interpretation) Mr. Chairman, with the motion there, we're not asking the minister to come up with a figure just from air. If she was capable of doing that, then we would probably ask her daily.

I just want to tell her that, in last year's main estimates, they requested \$37 million for medical travel, but they requested another \$8 million under supplementary appropriations because they were way under budget. Now, we know for sure that fuel prices went up, the airfare will probably will go up, and we know that oil is over \$100 a barrel. They're not factored in and they're not for sick people.

(interpretation ends) Transportation alone is going to probably increase by ten percent; I would say close to ten percent. In my estimates, Mr. Chairman, we're not asking the minister to invent new stuff, but I think there's certainly a more accurate figure that can be presented to the House.

I also not only just look at that figure, but if you look at the whole expenses under that item in the main estimates on page H-7, the Contract Services amazingly decreased by \$10 million. We don't know where those figures went; we didn't get to that question.

Surely, I think the minister should agree with us that they need to do better planning. We don't believe that they have been doing an analysis that are acceptable to this committee, and I think by agreeing to do a better analysis and planning, we're prepared to work with accurate information as possible. Just to try and say, for arguments sake, that you couldn't invent a new way of putting accurate figures, and we know you couldn't do it, but we would like you to cooperate with us. That's all we're asking you right now. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, the motion is asking to defer the Department of Health's budget, number one. With that, there are impressions being said, "Why would we defer the department for an estimate number?" I think the minister has, rightfully so, pointed out that the number that is being presented is based on the best guesstimate that the department has available to it. It also is contingent on the medical travel that we have talked about, and indeed, there was a question on it in the House.

There is a presumed savings in the medical contract, airline contract, over several years, and that would be reflected in an expectancy of savings money in the medical travel. When you're dealing with medical travel, Mr. Chairman, you're dealing with an area where you have very little control over what those costs will be. If you have an RSV outbreak in a community, you could end up blowing your budget within a very short period of time. That's the reality of doing business but you don't defer the budget because you don't believe the numbers aren't realistic.

Also, in the contingencies that we have in government and that Minister Tapardjuk talked about earlier, there is a contingency there to cover medical travel. Again, that would be discussed when you get to the Department of Finance's budget. When you look at the contingencies, there are some monies in there to actually, I think, cover off some of the concerns the members are saying.

Fundamentally, when you want to defer a budget, you want to defer it because number one, you don't agree with the budget; number two, you think there's something wrong with the total amount of the dollar values that are available; those types of things. I don't think that we should be deferring a budget or a line item on a certain part of the budget based on the motion that is presented. The motion says to defer the whole budget of the department, the largest department in government, because we're not happy with one line item. That's a bit much. The public out there deserves a bit more of an explanation than that.

I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that if you have a concern with that area of the budget, you complete the budget in the House, and that's what we're supposed to, and then over the next 24 hours the minister, because we have a better tracking system in place, we will be able to look at the numbers again. We can't add to a budget; we can only take away from a budget, and the members know that.

I believe that when we get to the Department of Finance, there may be some opportunity there within the contingencies that we have in place to be able to look at it if that's the concern from the members. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Picco. To the motion. I have no more names. However, I will allow the mover of the motion to exercise his right to the last reply and this will close the debate. Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with some of the comments that I have heard over there. It's not about: we're hoping more people get sick. That's not what we want. Take a look at all of the indicators. Our health care professionals are fleeing the territory. We're getting increased costs in agency nurses. There are services that can't be offered here now because of a lack of professionals and all those other things that my colleagues said that just make sense.

Mr. Picco indicated that we can defer a budget if there's something wrong. Well, there is something wrong here. That's not a reflective number; it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure it out. The minister has made it quite clear that, "Well, we're hoping that with this new contract, we're going to save money." This budget was done months ago before we even had any sniff of what the contract was in place for, unless they already had it appraised and unless they already knew, which would raise more questions, but I doubt that very much.

We're not asking to invent anything. I'm not an accountant, I'm not a lawyer, and I'm not an economist. If you just take a look at the external factors related to any business, anything, inflation goes up and your costs go up - our population is increasing and the costs to operate in the north for the airlines have gone up. All of these numbers that were mentioned, like you said, are based on old numbers; a three-year-old price.

The minister had also pointed out that they had been pretty much on budget all the time, every year. I don't think that there's been a year that's gone by that we haven't had a supplementary appropriation for medical travel. I don't think so. I stand to be corrected on that but I'm pretty sure, every year, there has been a supplementary appropriation for the Department of Health.

She indicated that they had budgeted \$46 million for 2007-08. Actually, their main estimates for 2007-08 that we approved was \$37,416,000. That was what we approved, and then they revised through supplementary appropriations and it's now \$46 million.

All you have to do is take a look at a three-year-old price; the cost of everything else has gone up, the population growing, and a new Client Travel Policy that's supposed to be more open, which will have more uptake on it. With all of those factors, it doesn't take a genius to figure that, in all likelihood, the numbers are going to go up. That's where I'm saying, to me, I don't think that has been done properly and that's what I would like to see happen before we approve this budget.

So that's it for my comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. This closes the debate. We will now vote on the motion. Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask for a recorded vote.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. A recorded vote has been called. All those in favour of the motion, please stand. Thank you.

Mr. Tootoo.

Mr. Barnabas.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Curley.

Mr. Arvaluk. Order, please. Order.

Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Alagalak.

Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Kattuk.

Thank you. All those opposed, please stand. Thank you.

Mr. Akesuk.

Madam Aglukkaq.

Mr. Picco.

Mr. Tapardjuk.

Mr. Okalik.

Madam Brown.

Mr. Netser.

Thank you everyone. The motion is carried. We will close the debate on this budget of the department for now.

The committee had approved earlier that we will now move onto the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Mr. Premier, do you have opening comments?

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** I move to report progress.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. That was a short one.

>>*Laughter*

There is a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion, raise your hand. Opposed. The motion is carried. I will now rise to report progress.

**Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you, Members. Please be patient.

Thank you, Members. Going back to the Orders of the Day. Item 21. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Member for Uqqummiut, Mr. Arreak

### **Item 21: Report of the 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, and that one committee motion was carried. 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. (interpretation ends) Is there a seconder? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. The motion is in order. All those in favour. 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. A reminder for tomorrow morning, a meeting of the Standing Committee *Ajauqtiit* at nine o'clock in the morning in the Tuktuk Boardroom.

Orders of the Day for February 28:

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

**Speaker:** Can we have some order in the House, please. Order. Please proceed, Mr. Clerk.

**Clerk:** ...

17. Motions
  - Motion 26 – 2(4)
  - Motion 27 – 2(4)
18. First Reading of Bills
  - Bill 27
19. Second Reading of Bills
20. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
  - Bill 23
  - Bill 24
  - Bill 25
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. Members, our House stands adjourned until Thursday, February 28, and we'll reconvene at 1:30 in the afternoon.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 18:00*

