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

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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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

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(Iqaluit West)

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

Hon. Olayuk Akesuk

(South Baffin)

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(Rankin Inlet North)

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Hon. Louis Tapardjuk

(Amittuq)

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Tuesday, March 4, 2008**

Members Present:

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

Item 1: Opening Prayer

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

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Good afternoon, Premier, Ministers, and Members. Welcome. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Premier Okalik.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 154 – 2(4): Devolution

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to give you and all Nunavummiut good news about the devolution of control over resources in Nunavut.

On February 25, 2008, The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, committed to advancing our collective interests in Canada's Arctic and to bringing forward an integrated northern strategy. I look forward to this strategy that will promote economic and social development, the protection of the Arctic's unique environment and improve and devolve governance.

Canada is committed to progress on devolution discussions with Nunavut with an objective of providing long-term benefits for the people of Nunavut and all Canadians. Canada has committed to a phased approach to negotiations beginning with on onshore, non-oil and gas resource management, and following with onshore and seabed oil and gas resources management.

While we cannot prejudge future discussions and negotiations, this represents a significant change in position on Canada's behalf. This positive and powerful signal respects and treats Nunavut equally to all jurisdictions in Canada. I thank the Prime Minister for his commitment to Nunavut and to moving forward on a regime consistent with federal-provincial internal waters arrangements in the rest of Canada.

Devolution of federal responsibilities to Nunavut will make us a strong, self-reliant and contributing partner in Canada. At the appropriate time, I will be tabling the Prime Minister's letter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Education, Minister Picco.

Minister's Statement 155 – 2(4): Pan-Canadian Literacy Forum

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to inform my colleagues about an innovative event that will take place across Canada on April 14 and 15, 2008.

Mr. Speaker, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) has brought together provinces and territories to host the Pan-Canadian Literacy Forum. This interactive event will connect ten sites throughout the country to help expand the work of literacy across all Canadian jurisdictions.

With the purpose of bringing cutting edge thinking to literacy in Canada, and highlighting best practices, Nunavut will have a receiving site in Arviat. Mr. Speaker, the theme is *Literacy: The Path to Success*, where we will explore the adult literacy and lifelong learning.

Mr. Speaker, open forums and panel discussion between community members, educators, parents, students, in addition to elders are expected to be passionate, uplifting and hopeful. As part of this exciting program, we will also be receiving a keynote address from our own Susan Aglukark, who will be speaking live from Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, there is great excitement building throughout Canada for the ingenuity of the Pan-Canadian Literacy Forum. Finally, I believe it has the capacity to inspire and renew excitement about literacy here in Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Finance, and Culture, Language, Elders, and Youth, Minister Tapardjuk.

Minister's Statement 156 – 2(4): Fuel Tax Rebate Program Simplified

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to rise this afternoon to announce changes to the Fuel Tax Rebate Program. It has been two years since the program was first announced. That time has provided the opportunity to review the program and efforts have been made to create a simpler process for the applicants.

Mr. Speaker, feedback from the applicants about the application process indicated that it was too complicated. This led to a lack of uptake by harvesters in Nunavut and is reflected in the statistics for the program's first year of operation. For the 2006-07 fiscal year, only 29 harvesters applied for the program, for a total of nearly \$3,200 in claims.

Mr. Speaker, the renewed process decreases the burden on harvesters and places the onus on the GN to review applications to ensure that the program is not abused.

Under the original program, only harvesters who earned at least 25 percent of their income from harvesting or contributed meat to the community would qualify for the rebate. All harvesters are eligible for the rebate under the renewed program. Applicants fill out a simple form that includes space to identify whether the person is a full-time, part-time, or seasonal harvester.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague, the Minister of Environment, for helping to improve this program by engaging conservation officers in the application process.

After registering for the program, harvesters can then submit their receipts at any time of the year, and they will be reimbursed every three months with a minimum payment of \$10.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the renewed program will better meet the needs of harvesters and support the important contribution that our harvesters make to our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Tapardjuk. Item 2. Ministers' Statements. If there are no more, Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Arviat, Mr. Alagalak.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 360 – 2(4): Elders' Home for Arviat

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to express the need for an elders' group home in Arviat. This need has been identified by my constituents in Arviat many times in the past.

Mr. Speaker, as noted by my constituents, older couples and single elders often have limited abilities to care for themselves. They often find that they are unable to do their household chores. They have difficulty with basic activities, such as doing their shopping, clearing away ice and snow from their doorways, cutting up country food and so on.

Mr. Speaker, even though they are older, they are aware of what needs to be done to continue with their daily living, but their ability to do it is limited.

Mr. Speaker, with limitations on what they can do, our elders find it difficult to stay in good health and live as comfortably as other residents in the community. Their situation causes much stress and hardship on our elders, especially when they are by themselves in their dwellings.

Mr. Speaker, these circumstances have led to the untimely passing away of a number of our Arviat elders.

Mr. Speaker, Arviarmiut are very compassionate and considerate.

Therefore, I am conveying their request that the government consider establishing an elders' group home in Arviat so that our elders can live more comfortably and make life lighter for themselves and their families. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Member's Statement 361 – 2(4): The Annual Fraser Institute Rankings

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Nunavut's mineral resources are the envy of many jurisdictions and countries around the world. Our potential remains largely untapped, and we must continue to work hard to attract exploration and development activity.

Mr. Speaker, Nunavut's representatives attend industry gatherings and work hard to promote our territory. This week they are attending the Prospectors & Developers Conference, the world's largest mining conference.

They are trying to get the word out that Nunavut is a stable political jurisdiction with sensible policies that support natural resource development.

Mr. Speaker, the Vancouver-based Fraser Institute annually ranks countries, states, provinces and territories on how attractive they are to mining companies as locations to invest their exploration money. They survey over 300 mining executives to prepare their annual rankings.

Mr. Speaker, the institute has developed a Policy Potential Index that measures the overall policy attractiveness of the 68 jurisdictions in the survey in terms of how welcoming they are to companies.

I am disappointed to note that Nunavut's ranking has fallen to 54th place out of the 68 jurisdictions surveyed. In the previous year, we were ranked 39th, and are now ranked just above Papua New Guinea.

Ten provinces and the NWT are ranked above Nunavut. Quebec, Alberta and Manitoba are in the top five. They are our Canadian competitors.

Mr. Speaker, the mining executives who were surveyed indicated that Nunavut's regulatory regime, workforce, and lack of infrastructure are factors in their decisions whether or not to invest in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I was encouraged last year when the Department of Economic Development and Transportation released the Government of Nunavut's new *Mineral Exploration and Mining Strategy*.

The Minister of Finance's recent budget speech stated that the strategy, and I quote, "is designed to prepare Nunavummiut to benefit from mineral development, create an infrastructure to enable it, and develop policies to promote and sustain this important economic driver."

I was also encouraged to see movement towards developing a uranium mining industry.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, the department's 2008-09 business plan indicated that a "final report on the review" of Nunavut's permitting and regulatory structures to identify areas of inefficiency and duplication was completed in the fall 2007. I look forward to reading the final report and recommendations and urge the minister to table this report in the Legislative Assembly without further delay.

However, it is clear to me that much more needs to be done to slash the red tape that is impeding our journey towards greater economic self-sufficiency and prosperity for our communities.

I also note that the department's business plan for the coming year indicates that it will "support the Department of Education in the development of a mine training facility in Nunavut."

Mr. Speaker, the Bathurst Inlet Port and Road Project has been a dream of the Kitikmeot Inuit since 1994. They recognized 14 years ago that most of the Kitikmeot's mineral

resources in the Slave Geologic Province cannot be accessed without mining infrastructure.

The BIPAR proponents – Kitikmeot Corporation and Nuna Logistics - recently submitted their 5,000 page, 10-binder application to Nunavut Impact Review Board. It is the first Inuit-owned application that NIRB has received.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that with the Nunavut mine training initiatives that are currently underway, coupled with improvements in Nunavut's permitting and regulatory structures, and supported by NIRB's full and open public review of Bathurst Inlet Port and Road Project, that the 2009 Fraser Institute rankings will show Nunavut in the top five Canadian jurisdictions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Member for Nattilik, Ms. Aglukkaq.

Member's Statement 362 – 2(4): Birthday Greetings to Husband

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is a very special day for a very special someone. It's my husband's birthday today, so if he's listening today, happy birthday, (interpretation) and I love you, (interpretation ends) and I hope you have a good day, Robbie. Thank you very much.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Ms. Aglukkaq. Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet North, Mr. Curley.

Member's Statement 363 – 2(4): Reflections on the State of Democracy and Debate in Nunavut

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As we approach slowly the end of the Second Legislative Assembly, I am pleased to offer some reflections on the state of democracy and debate in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, for the record, no one needs any lessons on this area but this Assembly can improve to allow for more public participation, in my opinion.

It is my intention to make a number of statements in the coming months on this important theme.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, the Legislative Assembly is presently considering the government's main estimates and business plans for the coming year. These are very important documents that we have.

I find it very interesting to note that if one carefully reviews the government's business plans for the coming year, the word "strategy" appears in the document in no less than 138 times.

Mr. Speaker, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, we frequently raise concerns regarding the infrastructure deficit in our communities, the shortage of funding for new capital projects, and the lack of health care professionals. These are very serious issues, Mr. Speaker.

However, Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing that the government does not lack, it is strategy documents, "action plans," and indeed, "plans of action."

Mr. Speaker, we have an Energy Strategy, we have a Nunavut Transportation Strategy, a Suicide Intervention and Prevention Strategy, a Char Marketing Strategy, an Olympic Games Marketing Strategy, and a Carving Stone Action Plan. We have strategies to address youth, children, elders, and women. What else?

Mr. Speaker, I could go on for quite some time, but it will not surprise me if the day comes when the government hires a consultant to produce a "Strategy for the Development of Strategies."

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, what about the public and the business community, and our communities? Who will consult with them?

Mr. Speaker, although I agree that strategies and plans are important, the act of simply producing colourful documents is not enough.

I ask for unanimous consent to finish my comments.

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

Mr. Curley: Thank you and I appreciate my colleagues, Mr. Speaker.

We need concrete ways of implementing the strategies. We need to allocate hard dollars and real people to make them work.

Mr. Speaker, I also believe that we need to fully and rigorously scrutinize the strategies that are produced and tabled in this Legislative Assembly, and allow for more public debate. They need to be publicly debated so that our constituents can see what their government is doing.

Mr. Speaker, I will have more to say on this theme in the coming days. Thank you.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curley. Item 3. Members' Statements. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Premier Okalik.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to recognize a visitor who is a Captain from the Navy, Captain T.C. Tulloch. I would like to welcome him.

>>Applause

The military is up here on training exercises. Tulloch; his name is very appropriate for the work that he does in Inuktitut, but we don't have a port up here, my apologies for that. I encourage you to come back once we have a port.

I also want to recognize Sammie Peter, who is one of my constituents.

>>Applause

Next to him is one of your constituents, Abraham Angnakak. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Premier. Yes, I most certainly do represent him. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Iqaluit East, Mr. Picco.

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It gives me great pleasure to welcome to the Gallery a young student, a constituent of mine from Apex from a well-known family here in Iqaluit and Apex, Margo Crawford. Welcome to the Gallery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Welcome to the Gallery. (interpretation) Thank you. Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. If there are no more, Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. Barnabas.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 457 – 2(4): Status of Fuel Hedging Policy

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions today are for the Minister of Finance.

The world price of oil remains above \$100 U.S. a barrel and there appears to be no end in sight to price increases. The government has now introduced regulations to allow its new Fuel Hedging Strategy to be implemented. Can the minister outline for the House today the next steps of implementing this strategy for the 2008 fuel re-supply? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is the same question that was posed and at this time, we are still reviewing exactly what it is. At this time, the Cabinet will have to review what we will be doing, so I cannot answer that question at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) MLAs have urged the government to be frank with Nunavummiut about the risks involved in a hedging strategy, and I was glad to see that the government's budget package acknowledges that there is risk. Can the minister indicate to the House today how it will manage this risk? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I just stated, the hedging policy for fuel, with regards to how much we can go over and how much we can expend for the fuel re-supply, at this time, we are in the process of figuring out how it could be best handled and managed. For example, if we're to buy the fuel, we could make investments to sell it to contractors.

At this time, we still have to work those out. So for that reason, once this policy is in place and completed, and had been reviewed by the Cabinet, then I will be able to give him a definite answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Barnabas: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On February 19 of last year, the GN announced additional funding of \$1.5 million to assist municipalities to "help reduce the impact of increased power and fuel costs." Can the minister indicate to the House if the GN is considering similar additional help for municipalities this year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): I am not too clear on that, so I will have to get back to the member so that I can give him a proper response, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Barnabas, the minister will get back to you on that question. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit Centre, Mr. Tootoo.

Question 458 – 2(4): Preferred Option for Renovations of Inuksuk High School

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister responsible for Education.

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Speaker, yesterday when I was asking the minister about the renovation to the Inuksuk High School, he had indicated that they need to get a firm handle on dollar values as well as timeframes. In relation to the preferred option of the government, I'm just wondering if you could give us an idea if they have a handle on things yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated yesterday in the House, there's a lot of work that needs to be done on the options that had come forward, and by working through those options in the options paper, I think we have been able to whittle it from nine down to three.

There is one preferred option that the member was speaking about yesterday, and with that option, there are also other contingencies that need to be factored in. For example, there's landscaping issues, transportation issues, as well as sighting issues. So when those are completed, as well as construction costs and so on, then we will have a better number.

At that time, we would have to seek extra funds, depending on the price tag, to the FMB, but again, those are the logistics as well as the financial things we have to work out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Does the minister have any idea of how much extra money? I know the deputy minister, at the annual general meeting had indicated, and I think it was in the media, that the budget had to be approved for it. We approved the capital budget in the fall, so that would indicate that they don't have enough money that's been appropriated already. So does he have any idea of how much more money they will be looking for that option? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We all know in the House here and businesses trying to do business in Nunavut, not just in Nunavut but across Canada, that capital costs have continued to increase. I know I had a conversation with one of the ministers from Alberta before Christmas telling me that they had cancelled several billion dollars worth of capital projects because each project kept coming in over budget. So it's not just unique to us here in Nunavut.

In this case, the longer the program goes on, then, of course, we see the costs coming up. We know we had some discussion with the school; we had budgeted \$17 million in the first two tenders that came in, and in this case, in the community of Gjoa Haven, the first tender came in at \$33 million and the second came in at \$30 million.

So that's why we have a budgeted amount that we approved, over \$21 million in the budget, to do the renovations that have been discussed. However, we know that those costs have increased and we have to look at what those dollar values are, and that's why we said in the House yesterday that there were contingencies and it was contingent on being able to bring those numbers down to a better estimate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand, at the meeting, the deputy minister had indicated that she wasn't able to offer many details but the department was still awaiting final approval of the budget, and like I said, I thought we approved that already.

It goes on to indicate that they're expecting it to come in around \$40 million now for the renovations. Can the minister confirm if that's what the new costs are projected to be? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. After speaking with the Premier very quickly, we're working on that strategy and strategizing to see what those numbers would be.

If I am correct in hearing what the member had just said, I think the member suggested that it would be around \$40 million, and that's not the number that I have, Mr. Speaker, it's actually lower than that.

Again, I don't want to get into chasing a number because I don't have those final figures, like I said, and we have to pick the final option and we have to have that public meeting, so I don't want to preclude what's going to occur in the meeting. However, what we are trying to do is ascertain what that number will be; we have a ballpark figure and we're working towards that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's good to hear the minister is in the ballpark; they said they had a ballpark number and I would assume that that was for the preferred option that they have. Given the fact that it is a ballpark figure; could he tell us what that ballpark figure is? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I don't want to get into publicly stating what a ballpark figure is. We use the terminology of ballpark figure because we don't want to state a number in the House and then come back and say it was 50 percent or 80 percent below or above that number.

What I can say to the member is that over the next couple of weeks, we would hope to be in a position to firm up that number and then bring that forward to the proper mechanism that we have in government to approve those numbers when we have them. Again, I don't want to preclude what that would be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 459 – 2(4): Tabling of Report on Review of Regulatory Structures

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, earlier in my Member's Statement, I mentioned that there was a final report completed in the fall of 2007 by the department on the regulatory structures in Nunavut.

My question for the minister: I would like the minister to tell us why he has not tabled the recently completed report of the review of regulatory structures, and will he commit to table it in the House this week – yes or no? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I haven't seen the report, so I can't commit to tabling it this week. Thank you.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that candid answer. I hope his officials will brief him this week and they can take a look at it, and if he can't table it this week, if he could commit to tabling it next week before the House adjourns; I think it's vitally important that we have that information as MLAs.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell the House if he personally, not his officials, Mr. Speaker, but he personally, as the minister, has sat down with NTI and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada decision makers to find ways of further streamlining the Nunavut regulatory environment, and if not, why not? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear.

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

Hon. Patterk Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand the Premier sat with the appropriate boards. Thank you.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister again. Hopefully, the Premier could, perhaps, do a Minister's Statement briefing us on what his discussions were with those organizations.

Mr. Speaker, last week, Ottawa opened an entity called, "The Major Projects Management Office," and the goal of the Major Projects Management Office is to improve coordination within Canada's regulatory system by providing industry with a single, efficient point of entry into federal process.

My question for the minister: can the minister tell the House if his department has added input into the establishment of a Major Projects Management Office in Iqaluit or elsewhere in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Patterk Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do not have that information but the review that the member is referring to will be completed by this month. When we have completed it, we are doing it in conjunction with EIA, but once that is available to the public, then we can do that. Thank you.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that the federal government does open a Major Projects Management Office in Nunavut to help the mining companies when they're entering into the federal system in Nunavut, to help them get through the regulatory regime that the federal government has in place.

Mr. Speaker, in my Member's Statement earlier, I indicated that the Bathurst Inlet Port and Road Project has submitted a 5,000-page, 10-binder application to the Nunavut

Impact Review Board for review, and I know it sounds daunting, it's a massive document; you would need a dump truck to deliver it to various agencies and interveners, and everybody else that require copies. It's quite a massive undertaking by the BIPAR folks to get that through the regulatory regime.

My question for the minister: can the minister clearly state for the public record today that the Government of Nunavut fully supports the Bathurst Inlet Port and Road Project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. I will get Premier Okalik to answer that question.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I want to assure the member that we continue to support the Bathurst Inlet Port and Road Project. As you know, there have been some difficulties with the mining industry in that part of the world and we want to try and support that type of economy in the western part of our territory. So we remain strong backers of that project and hope that it will encourage further development of the mineral industry in Nunavut.

So I want to assure the member that we continue to do our work in reducing barriers to that type of activity. I have worked with successive Indian Affairs Ministers to try and reduce regulation throughout Nunavut, so we'll continue to work on that as well. So I want to thank the member of his ongoing support of our efforts. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Premier. Oral Questions. Member for Akulliq, Mr. Mapsalak.

Question 460 – 2(4): Number of Justices of the Peace Trained to Deal with Family Abuse Intervention Act

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, when the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* is put into force on March 31, he stated that the JPs in the communities will have a lot of work to do when they have to deal with abuse and that there will be some training in the communities due to this is very important Act.

My question is: how many JPs were trained in Nunavut before this Act comes into force? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. (interpretation ends) Minister of Justice, Premier Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. They can't all take the training at the same time; only some of them will be dealing with the Act. One person will be the leader and 12 other people will be dealing with the justice committees and they will all be well trained. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is obvious that this will be very important work and very useful. Will you be bringing out more training opportunities in the future for the JPs? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Premier Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We want this Act to go forward and the training will not stop even after it's in place. There is no doubt in the future that there will be a lot turnover in this field. We want all Nunavummiut to know how training is very important.

As a government, we continue to train our employees and evaluate them to see where there needs to be improvement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for his response. What about the communities that have not completed the training in their justice committees? When they have to work in their communities to deal with abuse, how can they work through that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Premier Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The employees have already identified the problems amongst themselves. We have employees in the justice committees all the time, at any hour and every day; an employee who is familiar with their work. They also know who to contact when the need arises and they keep each other well-informed. This will continue and when there is an emergency, there is always someone there to assist them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I think I understood that some of the communities are aware of the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* and where they could direct their concerns. If there is urgency in the communities, can the minister give us the

names of people who could be contacted if there is an emergency? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Premier Okalik.

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I cannot bring it out to everyone yet because it's confidential. Every community has an employee that knows the *Family Abuse Intervention Act*. They are all aware of the Act, what it contains, and who the contacts are. So therefore, all of the employees, administrators, coordinators have the telephone numbers so they can contact that person to assist. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 461 – 2(4): Update on New School for Sanikiluaq

Mr. Kattuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My thoughts are with the people of Sanikiluaq. I know that they have to look for that individual that is lost out on the land and I would like to remind the residents of Sanikiluaq that they are in our thoughts.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Education.

Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to hear in the Minister of Finance's Budget Address, that the government is advancing funding for new school construction in Sanikiluaq so that the project can move immediately from design to construction

I would like to be able to let the people of Sanikiluaq know the good news about the school. Can the minister clarify exactly when construction on Sanikiluaq's new school will begin? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The existing school in Sanikiluaq is over 115 percent occupancy right now and we know we need to bring a new school forward.

At some point in the session in May, we will be able to look at a revised Five-Year Capital Plan including the Sanikiluaq school. It is our hope, Mr. Speaker, and the intention to have all documents tender-ready, and that should be the design for the school, in the next several weeks.

We're looking at a construction timeline, if everything goes well in May, to have some site work and everything this fall of 2008 and construction to start in earnest during the spring of 2009 for completion in 2010-11. That's the quick schedule for construction. Again, we'll have a better timeframe after the session in May. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kattuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister but I can ask more questions.

The design for Sanikiluaq's new school was completed some time ago. Can the minister confirm that there will be no further delays in beginning construction as a result of changes or modifications to the approved design? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There's a lot of work being done on the plans for the school in Sanikiluaq because of the occupancy and the other issues that we're all aware of at the school.

The documents are almost all tender-ready, meaning they're ready to go to tender. Once that is completed, we would look at, hopefully, site work and so on to begin this fall in the community and that's 2008; the construction, the sealift, and everything to occur, and the construction for 2009 and completion of the school by 2011. That's a two and a half year timeframe. Again, we will have to confirm numbers in the May session but I don't see that as a problem.

So everything is being pushed right up right now to have, as soon as the session occurs in May, to have everything ready to go in Sanikiluaq, and indeed, hopefully, in the next few weeks, we would actually have the project out for tender. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kattuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister but I want to reconfirm what he said. In order for construction to proceed as soon as possible, the process for ordering materials and supplies should have already begun. Can the minister update this House on what steps have been taken to date to make the construction of the new school in Sanikiluaq a reality? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said earlier, we have been working aggressively on the Sanikiluaq plan to have all of the documents tender-ready and have them ready to go out in the next several weeks.

Again, if the tenders go out, let's say, after April 1, we have to wait for construction companies to bid on the project itself, and they'll come in, we will have to evaluate them and everything.

So I would expect that we would be able to have at least some of the site work occur this fall in the community and then the majority of the supplies for the new school will have to come in on sealift next year, and then that's when the construction would start in earnest. That's trying to expedite and speed up the process for the tender and the construction.

The good news for Sanikiluaq is that the money has been... the project itself has been announced and is being fast tracked like some of the other projects. We will have approval for those programs in the May session and we will move on from there. So that's the good news that the community has been guaranteed a school, and the tender packages and everything has been fast tracked. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Kattuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I asked the minister if the process for ordering materials and supplies have already begun. So did he answer me on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member has been doing a great job as an advocate for the school in Sanikiluaq, and no, I did not say that the materials would be coming in right now.

We have to go to tender first and there's a standard time frame on tenders, as the member knows. We would hopefully be able to be doing that in the next couple of weeks, as I said, at the beginning of April 1, that week, to get the tender in the paper and advertise it, and then from that point on, once the tender comes back, they're analyzed. I would hope to be able to do site work in Sanikiluaq this coming summer and fall, and then construction to begin in earnest in next spring/summer in 2009 and have completion for 2011. That's how we're fast tracking the school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 462 – 2(4): Development of Emergency Management Plans

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my first question to the Minister of Community and Government Services. First of all, I would like to thank the staff who were working very hard during the state of emergency.

The recent state of emergency in Rankin Inlet has reminded all of us about the importance of having up to date emergency plans in place for our regions and communities.

The business plan for the minister's department indicates that one of its priorities for the coming year is to "initiate meetings with municipalities and conduct Hazardous Index Risk Assessment reviews as they assist in the development of Emergency Management Plans for Municipalities."

Can the minister explain clearly to the House what is involved in this process and indicate when she expects updated emergency plans to be in place for communities in the Kivalliq? Thank you.

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

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleague for posing that question. As the government found out, it did remind us about the importance of having up to date emergency plans; we have to be fully prepared as a department for these emergencies.

We do have emergency plans for each of the 25 communities in Nunavut. In regard to emergency plans, we had passed a piece of legislation in November 2007. In order to be better prepared as a government, we have tasked staff here in Iqaluit, and one of our staff whom most of you know, Mr. Zebedee, has been working on those issues at the Brown Building. His office underwent a major renovation and now has space for emergency management situations in Nunavut, and from whence direction can be sent out throughout Nunavut and all of its communities.

This office is also undertaking training workshops for various communities in Nunavut and on top of that, the federal government has also set up emergency plans through the auspices of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Working Group, or FPT as it is known as, our involvement in these federal, territorial, and provincial discussions on the issue of emergency, along with the inclusion of senior members of our staff working for Nunavut Emergency Management.

Further, our staff also works with Public Safety Canada, and they are a good sounding board for our staff and this is all part of our Emergency Preparedness Measures. We also have training sessions with most of the hamlets and the communities have mostly completed their own Emergency Response Plans. Thank you.

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

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm sure that she'll be able to read my first question in the *Hansard*. I had asked about developing an Emergency Management Plan for municipalities, as well as for the regions and whether the plans are adequate.

In the Keewatin region plan, we noted several deficiencies, that there was no emergency generator in our region. We were fortunate that we were able to get one from the Northwest Territories.

This is my first supplementary. The Legislative Assembly passed Bill 12, Nunavut's new *Emergency Measures Act*, last fall. Under this Act, detailed regulations will need to be

developed. Will the minister commit to consulting with MLAs, municipalities and SAOs in the development of these regulations before they are approved by Cabinet? Thank you.

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

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be reading the *Hansard* to make sure that I read your question tomorrow since it is also a learning tool for me. Yes, in regard to the question, the SAOs will be included along with the hamlet councils, obviously. We will make sure that all the stakeholders are included in the consultations and when we are developing the regulations under the *Emergency Measures Act*.

We found out that it can lead to dangerous situations and we have learned exactly what needs to be done, especially in the middle of winter, during bad weather, such as blizzards and so on.

Yes, I agree with the seriousness of his question; these are important and serious matters. I'll make sure that we look into all the issues that you bring up in your question. Further, I will commit to having my staff review the issues as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, in the House, I asked an important question to the Minister of Energy regarding the Qulliq Energy Corporation's handling of the recent situation in Rankin Inlet and that the minister will produce a report outlining the issues faced during that crisis. I was pleased to have obtained a commitment from the minister to undertake an independent review of the situation. Will the minister direct her officials to fully participate in this review on whether the *Emergency Measures Act* needs to be amended? Would you be able to participate with the officials? Thank you, Mr. Speaker

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

Hon. Levinia Brown: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Yes, we need to work collaboratively since emergencies are very palpable to all parties concerned and a direct result of cooperation is that you can step forward.

When the department is preparing the report, we will do our utmost to include all of the findings, and perhaps, we can share information between the various parties involved in the crisis as to what was deficient, what worked, and what else has to be improved, and all of these issues will need to be identified in its details.

The member knows, as he was involved during the emergency declaration, we worked to the wee hours of the evening. We would meet at this office until 6 p.m., and then we

would go and meet to make our preparations. We also held teleconferences with the Minister of Nunavut Housing Corporation, as well as the Minister of Energy. As the minister responsible for emergency preparedness, I had to be involved. The member also took part in the meetings.

Yes, we will take what we have learned and try to implement it, but we have to work off of the same page and have the same understanding to determine which aspects of the plan were successful and which parts require more work. I know that the report will recommend solutions and both the member and myself will have to review the report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you. The issue that I raised yesterday is that sometimes the airlines could not make it to the communities, so I believe that we will have to review those issues as well. There was an obvious lack of communication and there was difficulty in meeting our freight requirements with the flights landing in Rankin Inlet to address the emergency crisis in Rankin Inlet.

My last question is in regard to the minister's budget. I note that the proposed budget for the department's Emergency Management Organization is only increasing by \$2,000 over last year's figures. Can the minister clearly justify to the House today and the listening public why no new resources have been allocated to this important function when we found out that we required more funds just for the Rankin Inlet emergency during our crisis? Therefore, we would like to hear from the minister why emergency funds were not felt to be important. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Levinia Brown (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, that's a very good question and I would like to thank the member for posing it. Yes, we will look into why no new funding was allocated and whether we will have to increase it.

In respect to my own experience, the staff who provide assistance do so by various means and this includes the different levels of government, including the federal government, when communities require assistance to deal with emergencies, whether it is due to a natural disaster or if it weather related.

As was the situation last week, generators were failing all at once. As an example, if a community were to experience a calamitous incident, then the hamlet council or the mayor would have to declare a state of emergency. Once the declaration has been passed, then the emergency response team would become the hub, through Mr. Zebedee's office, and he can relay the information to the various stakeholders, such as the federal government, and the federal government would then be able to provide assistance, such as authorizing a Hercules aircraft, which was offered to the community last week.

The member is correct in his assessment that the airlines are not in there to be at our beck and call during emergencies and their schedules were not conducive to meeting all of our challenges we faced. Further, some of the planes experienced mechanical issues and this exacerbated our problems. As our elders noted, when things go wrong, they can all go wrong at once. This is what occurred in our community and this statement became true during our crisis.

But, in regard to the member's question with respect to the budget on whether we could allocate more funds into the budget, I will check into this matter and inquire to my staff on whether we have any other options funding-wise, and when I find out the situation, I will be sure to apprise my colleagues here in the House by submitting our findings for review by all the members. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 463 – 2(4): Fuel Tax Rebate Program

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister responsible for Finance and my question is dealing with the Minister's Statement he made today on the Fuel Tax Rebate Program.

Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased, as I'm sure you are, that now, finally all harvesters are eligible for rebate under the new program.

Mr. Speaker, in his Minister's Statement, he indicated that only 29 harvesters applied for the program for a total of just about \$3,200 in claims. Can he indicate what other draw there was on the program other than harvests? I know it was targeted towards mining companies and stuff like that, but could he indicate how many other applications were taken other than harvesters and how much was there paid out in claims? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated in my Minister's Statement, only a handful of harvesters applied for the program for the previous fiscal year and I will also table that information on the expenditures that were used for this program.

There were only two applicants who were harvesters for the Fuel Tax Rebate Program. For the mining sector, I'm looking for that information. Yes, there was only one that we had signed an agreement with under the Fuel Tax Rebate Program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If there was just one applicant, then does the minister have the information of how much was paid in claims to that one applicant? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): I don't have that information with me at this time but we will table that information as soon as possible, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I look forward to that, I know that there have been numerous commitments to table that information and I look forward to finally seeing it soon.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister indicated in his Minister's Statement, he said that all harvesters are now eligible under the renewed program. Can the minister inform the Members of the House and the public listening who in each community, or how do they go about getting those applications for the rebate in? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you. The way we want to set it up is annually. We have to register the harvesters when they purchase fuel, and the harvester collects his receipts and then he can send their gasoline receipts to the Department of Finance, but before they send their receipts, they have to identify whether the person is full-time, part-time, or a seasonal harvester. If they have a full-time job, they have to also identify that.

Also, the conservation officers in the communities will have to sign the application form before the gas receipts are sent. The conservation officer will also sign a document stating whether the person is full-time, part-time, or a seasonal harvester.

Once the gas receipts are sent to the Department of Finance, then they will be processed and the amount of the tax rebate will be determined and how much the applicant will receive. We will send out cheques three times a year to the harvesters.

Once we start collecting the information in the communities, once they start sending out their applications, and once the harvesters have been registered for the first year, we will be able to provide a self-addressed stamped envelope, and then we would provide all of that to the harvesters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Tootoo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister had indicated earlier on in his response, he had indicated there is a space on the application where an individual would mark down whether they're a full-time, part-time, or a seasonal harvester.

Does the rebate, under the program, differ whether you're a full-time, part-time, or a seasonal hunter, or is it going to be the same for everyone? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, when this was first originally established, we stated that only harvesters who earn at least 25 percent of their income from harvesting could get rebates. What we're saying now is that whether they're a full-time, part-time, or a seasonal harvester, they would be eligible equally.

To prevent abuse from occurring, perhaps, an individual, who is not a harvester, and if an individual is not a full-time or a part-time hunter, the conservation officer would know that individual and whether this person is a harvester or not. So we have checks and balances there.

Everybody is going to get a rebate equally; whether they're a full-time, part-time, or a seasonal harvester. So we are looking for ways of how we can prevent abuse and we will also follow the Auditor General's recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 464 – 2(4): Construction of Sanikiluaq School

Mr. Kattuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I didn't quite finish with the Minister of Education in my earlier questions.

>>*Laughter*

I wanted to update the minister that the designs were finished five or six years ago and a location has been selected. To me, the site work can be started this spring and construction can start in the fall. Will he agree with me that the construction can start this fall? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I said was the project was tender-ready. It hasn't been tendered yet, so we have to wait to tender to go out to see who bids on the

contract. I know the lot has been selected and I know that all of that information that we need in Sanikiluaq is ready, but we have to tender the project and we have to wait until the bids come in, and then we have to award the project.

I don't know how long that timeframe will take and that's why I suggested to the members that we should be able to do some site work in Sanikiluaq. It will push the project up from where it was last year into the budget. We announced in the budget speech by Minister Tapardjuk that, indeed, that money would be forthcoming and we are trying to expedite that school. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 465 – 2(4): Support for Residential School Survivors

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

Mr. Speaker, earlier in this session, my colleague from Rankin Inlet North posed a question regarding the level of support that the Department of Education was providing to former residential school students to receive their common experience payments. The minister indicated that his department is assisting former students in securing information to obtain their records.

My question for the minister: can the minister clarify whether his department provides any other form of support to former residential school students from Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, under the common school experience payout, which was a settlement with the federal government, there have been requests made through the Department of Education in Nunavut for help in getting information to prove the students were in school and we have helped facilitate that where we were able. Those requests have come through, as I said to the Member for Rankin Inlet North.

Other types of support mechanisms; maybe the member could clarify what he means by other types of support to the students. For example, if there are issues because of the residential school and treatment, and so on, those types of activities usually occur through the auspices of our own Health and Social Services Department if there are mental health issues and so on.

So maybe if the member could clarify his question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My first supplementary will probably clarify my first question to the minister. To help clarify it; many former residential school students suffer from long-term mental health and other debilitating issues as a result of their residential school experience.

My question for the minister: can the minister clarify what specific counselling support or other related mental health services are provided to former residential school students in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the member for clarifying the question. I think all members remember, a little over a year ago, we had an opportunity to meet with the Aboriginal Healing Group that were going around working with people across Nunavut who were part of the residential school program, and they outlined some of the things that they were doing at counselling services and so on.

At the same time, there are also counsellors who are travelling to the communities providing that type of support under the auspices of mental health and care. Most of the students, for example, Mr. Speaker, who were identified would not to have counsellors from the Department of Education, but indeed, would fall under the Department of Health where necessary.

Again, there are other opportunities and avenues out to that; we have talked about including the Aboriginal Healing Fund and including the counsellors that are going around to communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Peterson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that answer. Mr. Speaker, yesterday I had an opportunity to talk to an individual in the Kitikmeot who is working very closely with the survivors of residential schools. He says he's overwhelmed by the people coming to him for help and counselling, and he works with an organization, ironically, with the Government of the Northwest Territories. He told me about an interagency group there that consists of the Department of Education, RCMP, the Healing Foundation, and other groups, and he says they provide a considerable amount of information and support to him.

As well, the survivors of residential schools have indicated that the Government of Nunavut does not have a similar Interagency Group with a specific mandate to address the counselling and mental health issues of former residential students.

So my question for the minister: can the minister tell this House whether his department works with other departments or organizations within the Government of Nunavut to address the specific needs of this group of Nunavut citizens? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: First of all, Mr. Speaker, if the constituent of the member is having issues and so on with dealing with the issue around the common school experience and the residential school, we have support mechanisms within the government with the Department of Health and Social Services with mental health and mental health counsellors and so on. I'm sure that if that person came forward and made themselves known to the department, then we would be able to help them.

On a regular basis, Mr. Speaker, this communication is not only between the ministers on different aspects of different programs, roles and responsibilities within their individual departments, there's also work on the ground in given communities. If there was a need, for example, for an Interagency Group, which we have in a lot of our communities and in most of our regions, then that opportunity is brought forward. 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. The individual I'm talking about actually works for the Government of Nunavut. He was expressing his concerns that his own department and the Government of Nunavut doesn't have an interagency group to support his efforts and efforts of other people like him to help the residential school survivors, but he says he works closely with the Government of the Northwest Territories and they have all that support there, so he's wondering why doesn't the Government of Nunavut have it, and he is quite concerned about that.

My next question for the minister: can the minister tell the House whether the income support case management system identifies what income support clients are victims of the residential school system, and if so, would he consider directing resources from under the Income Support umbrella to address the specific needs of this group of Nunavummiut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know that there are a lot of socio-economic issues within Nunavut itself and we do have support mechanisms in place for Nunavummiut, not specifically just residential school people but also the Nunavut population in general.

So if those needs are made known to us, then we try to facilitate and we have an obligation, of course, Mr. Speaker, as a government to do that, and we will continue to do that.

Under the Income Support Program specifically, if someone, for example, was on income support, then they're eligible for more range of programs and services. Specifically, when we deal with some of the issues around mental health, then those would be covered off by our sister department, the Department of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Members, I would like to remind you that Question Period is now over. Let's move on with our Orders of the Day. Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. If there are none, Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Petitions. Item 11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees. Item 12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills. Member for Akulliq, Mr. Mapsalak.

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My apologies, I'm wondering if we can return to Item 11.

Speaker (interpretation): Members, just to remind you, we're now on Item 12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills. Mr. Mapsalak.

Item 12: Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills

Committee Report on Bills 008 – 2(4): Status of the Review of Bill 6, the Proposed “Official Languages Act” and Bill 7, the Proposed “Inuit Language Protection Act”

Mr. Mapsalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As the Chair of the Standing Committee *Ajauqtiit*, I am pleased to report to the House on the status of the standing committee's review of Bill 6, the proposed *Official Language Act* and Bill 7, the proposed *Inuit Language Protection Act*.

Mr. Speaker, the standing committee has now held two sets of public hearings on these bills. The standing committee would again like to thank all of the individuals and organizations that took the time to make submissions to the committee and appear before it.

The committee would also like to thank the Minister of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth for his recent public appearance before the committee, which was also held in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, these hearings were excellent opportunities for members to discuss areas of concern that have emerged during the standing committee's review of these bills.

Mr. Speaker, language is a very important issue for all Nunavummiut, and it is important that we take the time to ensure that our legislation is as strong as it can be within the realities in which we operate.

Many people, especially unilingual elders, have been under the impression that the creation of Nunavut would result in the immediate transformation of all aspects of our government and society, including the provision of language services.

There is clearly a perception that once these bills have been passed, all services and information will be immediately delivered and available in the Inuit language. It is important that our expectations be realistic while we remain committed to improving the services to our constituents.

Mr. Speaker, Nunavummiut have great expectations with respect to these bills. The standing committee recognizes the importance of these bills and how they will affect the future of our territory and government. They must be given the fullest possible consideration.

Mr. Speaker, this House passed a motion last week to extend the period of time for the committee to continue its review of these bills. I would like to thank all members for their support of this motion, which will allow the standing committee to move forward and continue its scrutiny of these bills in further detail. The standing committee hopes to be in a position to make its final report to the House in the spring sitting.

With that, I move that the report of the standing committee be received by this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Mapsalak. Do the members agree that the report be received by the House?

Some Members: Agreed.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The report has been received by the House.

Item 12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills. Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Premier Okalik.

Item 13: Tabled Documents

Tabled Document 195 – 2(4): Letter from Prime Minister Stephen Harper regarding Devolution

Hon. Paul Okalik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very happy to table the following document: a Letter from Prime Minister Stephen Harper regarding Devolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Please bring the document to the table.

Thank you. Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Minister of Education, Minister Picco.

Tabled Document 196 – 2(4): Schedule for Student Loan Fund for Year Ending March 31, 2007

Hon. Ed. Picco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the following document: Schedule for Student Loan Fund for the Year Ending March 31, 2007. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Please bring the document to the table.

Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Minister of Finance, CLEY, and Human Resources, Minister Tapardjuk.

Tabled Document 197 – 2(4): Nunavut Fuel Tax Rebate Program, 2007 Annual Report

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the Nunavut Fuel Tax Rebate Program, 2007 Annual Report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. (interpretation ends) Can we have that document brought forward to the table, please?

(interpretation) Thank you. Item 13. Tabling of Documents. If there are none, Item 14. Notices of Motions. Member for Arviat, Mr. Alagalak.

Item 14: Notices of Motions

Motion 029 – 2(4): Extension of Review Period of Bill 21 – Notice

Mr. Alagalak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, March 6, 2008, I will move the following motion:

Now therefore I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Iqaluit Centre, that notwithstanding Rule 68(1), the period of time for the Standing Committee on Health and

Education to report on the review of Bill 21, the *Education Act*, be extended for a further 120 calendar days. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Item 14. Notices of Motions. Item 15. Notices of Motion for First Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Minister Tapardjuk.

Item 15: Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Thursday, March 6, 2008, that Bill 27, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act #3*, be read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): I apologize; please wait a moment.

Thank you. Minister Tapardjuk, can you identify the bill number? Bill 27 is already in our records. Can you please identify which number it is again? Mr. Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): The *Income Tax Act #3* and it's Bill 27, (interpretation ends) *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act #3*.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. I just want to say to you that Bill 27 has already been introduced in the House. We already have Bill 27, *An Act to Amend the Land Titles Act*.

Item 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Minister for Finance, Minister Tapardjuk.

Bill 28 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, No. 3 – Notice

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 28 is for *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act # 3*.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. It's identified now properly. Thank you.

Item 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 16. Motions. Item 17. First Reading of Bills. Item 18. Second Reading of Bills. Item 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 23, 24, and 25. Before we proceed with Committee of the Whole with Mr. Evyagotailak in the Chair, we will take a 20-minute break.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:13 and resumed at 15:43*

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

Chairman (Mr. Evyagotailak)(interpretation): Good day. Thank you for coming back. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In the 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: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to continue with Bill 23 and the review of the Main Estimates for the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth, followed by the Departments of Human Resources and Education. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Are we in agreement we continue with the Main Estimates for the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth?

Some Members: Agreed.

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

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes.

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

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. (interpretation) Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort Minister Tapardjuk's officials to the witness table.

Welcome, minister and your officials. For the record, please introduce your witnesses. Minister Tapardjuk.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my immediate left is Phoebe Hainnu, the Deputy Minister, and on my immediate right is David Kolot, the Financial Comptroller in our department, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister. Welcome, Ms. Hainnu and Mr. Kolot.

We concluded with F-6 yesterday. We will move on to (interpretation ends) Branch Summary. Community Programs. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Sorry, I have a question when we get to F-7.

Chairman: F-7. Community Programs. Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On page F-7, under Community Programs, your main estimates for Grants and Contributions with regards to sports has increased by \$13,000. Is that due to additional requests under this line item? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$13,000 is to offset the increase in costs due to forced growth, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Barnabas: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What is the status of implementing the recommendations from the Promoting Elders' Needs Strategy, specifically: (1) Respect for Elders and Elder abuse, (2) Passing on Knowledge, and (3) Elder Committees? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Minister.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. These are the categories, mainly for identifying the June 2006 World Elders Abuse awareness, and that was our starting point.

In September of that year, the participants were involved in meetings via teleconference. August of 2006, several of our elders took part in meetings hosted by the Department of Health and Social Services, NTI, Department of Justice, as well as my department was involved on how to deal with elder abuse.

Mr. Chairman, here are some of the items we have dealt with as to date. At this time in our department, we have an elder on staff who is documenting traditional Inuit laws, and obviously, these will have to be translated into English. To date, CLEY has been training elders to teach the younger generations for well being or other traditional practices.

Due to these and other initiatives, we are still working on several matters along with trying to implement some of the recommendations, especially how we can better protect or how we can better utilize our elders. Our elders are not being taken care of as we are starting to get into the ways of the Western society, so what we're trying to do is get them back into the society.

We are working on how elders in their communities can be taken care of and how their knowledge and wisdom can be incorporated into programs for communities. For that reason, we are working towards the values and knowledge of the Inuit and meet more often with elders so that we can have peace for Nunavummiut. Therefore, what we are working on is continuing on this program, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the benefit of the Kitikmeot region, what is the status of collecting oral history from the Kitikmeot communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Last year, I think we identified which community is going to be used to collect oral history. Kugaaruk is one community where we have started collecting oral history in the Kitikmeot region and we are also going to be collecting oral history from Kugaaruk and Gjoa Haven this year. We will also be collecting oral history from the Kivalliq region in Repulse Bay, Arviat, and Coral Harbour.

At this time, we are just collecting oral history and taping the traditional knowledge of the elders, especially our traditional customs. We're going to concentrate on Gjoa Haven and Kugaaruk this year, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Minister. Minister, please call me Chair, not Mr. Speaker. Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Does the department anticipate spending all of its 2007-08 Grants and Contributions budget before the end of this fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, we will be using the entire funding allocated for the 2007-08 fiscal year, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How does the department evaluate the success of its Grants and Contributions programs? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's obvious that they have to make a report if the monies are utilized. The individuals or entities that use those monies have to report back on how they used the monies and if they were beneficial. Not all communities are the same with regards to how they spend the monies and how beneficial it was.

I know how the monies are used in some of the communities. At times, we ask those individuals or entities how it was beneficial to use those monies. For example, they might get elders to take the young people out on the land to teach them and we ask those individuals or entities how it was beneficial to them.

After we have consulted with those entities, they would make a report. I'm aware, Mr. Chairman, that through the local radio stations, we hear a lot of things or programs where the youth are taken out on the land or out caribou hunting. We also get feedback from the participants about how successful the program was and what they have learned. Those are also in the report.

It's obvious how the grants and contributions we give are spent by different communities. I can say, Mr. Chairman, that some communities are not as successful as the others. Some individuals do not write reports nor do they have receipts of the monies that they had spent because we have asked some of them. But overall, we are dealing with all the issues in regard to grants and contributions to the communities if the monies are spent on what they were intended for, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Barnabas.

Mr. Barnabas (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my last question in regard to the youth as they fall under Community Programs. (interpretation ends) What is the status of renewing the Youth Identity Development Strategy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We are going to be sending some youth from Nunavut Tunngavik and the outlying communities this coming week. We're doing a planning strategy for the youth and how we can deal with them.

What we will expect is what kind of services are geared towards the youth. That's going to be happening next week and only after that workshop can I respond to his question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. F-7. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley: Thank you. (interpretation) I would also like to welcome you, Mr. Chairman, the minister, and his officials. Looking at the Community Programs, it's directed towards the elders and the youth and helps them in their efforts to promote Nunavut's culture and heritage.

First of all, I would like to ask the minister: what is your department doing to promote Nunavut's culture and heritage? Which department is responsible for promoting and protecting our heritage? Is it up to the government or is it up to the Inuit themselves, for

instance, through Inuit organizations? I'm asking you that question because I would like to know which department is responsible for that. (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under *Pinasuaqtavut* 2004-09, base for Inuit culture. It's clearly stated.

We will have to do some fund-raising. As that's the case, as the second government, elected officials, we have a goal, as the CLEY Department, to take the lead in implementing Inuit societal values within the government departments. For this reason, under *Pinasuaqtavut*, we had also identified that the Inuit should start feeling that this is their government. Inuit should understand we are the government of the Inuit and not a foreign culture.

The Inuit, especially the elders, have to know about the programs. For that reason, we would like to see a government that is more culturally relevant and have policies that are understood by Inuit. That's the only way that Inuit out there will start to believe that this is their government and that's why the Department of CLEY has set up the *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* entity to run the programs.

The various government departments have had meetings to brainstorm and identify the pieces of legislation. For example, the *Public Services Act* is being reviewed by the department to see if the government needs to do some more work on getting more Inuit employed and we have invited the *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit* Committee to participate.

We understand that our department is there to promote Inuit culture and heritage, but we do have entities within the government and they have committees who work on the policies and the policies we will be created. Inuit are the government of this territory and that's why we have to implement Inuit societal values within the government system, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley: Thank you. (interpretation) I would like to ask another question to the minister in regard to Inuit culture and elders. Have you had any discussions within the government or other organizations in each region on how different programs are set specific tasks? Have you had negotiations or have you considered setting aside a pot of money that would be used to accomplish these tasks? Are some of them split up? If that's going to be the case, what would the department think? (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you. I get confused between Mr. Chairman and Mr. Speaker at times. Just for your information, I'm not calling you "Mr. Speaker" purposefully but I did mean to say "Mr. Chairman." Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, in regard to the question about *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, we definitely have to get together and I agree with the member wholeheartedly. In 1998, there was a conference in Igloolik where they had representatives from each of the communities, the elders, the youth, NTI, and others. At that time, we brainstormed about what should be included within the government and when the Government of Nunavut was established, that was recognized. After that conference, we had not had an opportunity to meet again.

We had planned to meet again with the elders, the different organizations and entities, and representatives of Inuit birth right organizations from the regions. We were going to have another meeting following up the initial conference to find out exactly what's happening within the government and I think we will have to review that.

The question asked by MLA is something that we could very seriously consider. We're not doing enough in that department. We have to set a goal among all the departments. We have to have one goal, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister. I think it's up to us to carefully consider our culture and traditions with the government. We should also include the various organizations and again, we should be divvying up the dollars through Community Programs for the communities.

When it's not clarified, I think it's all of us who are not doing enough. We are losing our language and in regard to Community Programs, we know exactly what should be made available at the community level. I think that we're all not doing enough to set a goal and it seems like different organizations and governments are pointing fingers at each other. If you, as the Minister of CLEY, talk to those entities, you will find that we're just playing lip service to them. Mrs. Clinton would tell you, "I hope that you're not just a bunch of hot air." It seems like there's (interpretation ends) lots of talk but no action.

(interpretation) I would like to ask you to discuss this further. It's not going to become a reality right away but at the appropriate time, we should have an opportunity to meet and make plans for what should be implemented and so on. (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we can consider that but we will have to find some funds. I believe that it's possible, Mr. Chairman, because I feel that we could have more discussions on that after the NTI General Election.

I agree with my colleague that, as a government, our goal is to have Inuit employees. Our goal is to have 85 percent Inuit employment and we like to think it's a public government. Perhaps it would be ideal if NTI, as the land claims organization, could deal

with that. If they're not working hard on that, I believe, as a government, that Inuit should own the government. That's what we're going through with, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask another question to the department. I know that there's an excess of \$6 million that is used by the department for grants and contributions geared towards youth and elders' programs, and others such as the language programs. I know that there's funding there but it's not sufficient and you have apply for funding.

One thing that is not understood by the elders who don't have secretaries is how to go about applying for funding. When it's time to apply for funding, there are many communities in Nunavut and I know that not all of communities have secretaries to help them, so I wonder if you could elaborate on what the process is.

There's a line item in the budget where they use the funding for grants and contributions, but the public doesn't really know how to access that funding. They would like to apply for funding but they don't know where to go to apply for funding. I was wondering if you could elaborate on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we can provide some assistance. There is a toll-free number in Igloolik for people who are interested in applying for funding. We will be advertising that information through the media, such as *Nunatsiaq News* and *News/North*. Once you approve the grants and contributions, we will publicize that information before the end of March and inform the public that they will be able to apply for these funds.

This week or next week, all Members of the Legislative Assembly will be sent correspondence on grants and contributions' line items and all the municipalities will also receive a copy. Other entities, such as elders' and youth societies, will receive a copy of that information so that they are informed of what kind of programs or grants and contributions are available to them and where they can get more information.

So those are the things that we are working on at this time but we can add more action items, such as when Jonah Kelly makes public cassette recordings to send to the local radio stations in all of the communities. We can also go that route to disseminate that information. We can also review all of that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Alagalak.

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm very pleased to hear that and I'm very pleased that you explained the process because the public tends to think that

we work for your department and they think that we, as Members of the Legislative Assembly, provide funding.

Right after the session, I was provided the information and we had an extended adjournment at that time when they provided that information. Perhaps you can send that information to our constituency offices in our communities and provide them as public service announcements.

I have another question on the same page under Nunavut Arts. There's quite a bit of money allocated for that line item, so I would like to know what that's going to be used for. Is it for the operations of an organization, or is it for arts and crafts, or is it for art shows, or is it for consultants to do the designing of a facility? What's that money geared towards? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have identified that funding for arts and crafts or art supplies, and we have received applications for various items related to arts and crafts. For instance, we provided funding to Igloolik's ArtCirq for a show they recently held and the Tununiq Aqsarniit for their dance shows which are high in demand. We also provide assistance for events such as the Alianait Arts Festival that is held every spring.

We have provided assistance for a conference in Rankin Inlet for carvers and a carving workshop in Cape Dorset. We have also provided assistance for traditional dancing and drum dancing. This line item is geared towards the arts in general, such as theatre arts for example, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Alagalak.

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I understand that as being leisure arts, such as showcasing the traditional way of life.

Another question that I have is with regards to old artefacts, such as old grave sites, old clothing or anything that have been found. Although museums don't really house old artefacts, for example, as you know in Arviat, there's a small museum and it showcases traditional ways and there's also a library there. They need to be provided funding to operate that museum every year.

Sometimes we're asked questions with regards to the museums, such as the traditional artefacts of Inuit or traditional clothing. Why are we not filling these museums up with traditional clothing and artefacts? They put in current affairs into the archives just for reading. I was wondering how you segregate the traditional artefacts. What's the cap on how many artefacts that you would be getting or for archiving today's information? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We need to house the artefacts properly and those are the issues that we also have to consider. We need proper storage in the museum to preserve the artefacts and they can be provided some funding. Although we do have some funding to be used for artwork, for instance, if museums are going to start collecting artwork, these funds can be obtained through the application process.

The problem we are facing in Nunavut is that there's no storage facility to store and preserve the artefacts. We need proper storage and I know that the federal government can provide some additional support through that. We don't have that kind of storage facility in Nunavut and we don't have a museum.

We do provide some funding to renovate local museums and we can provide funding if they go through the application process, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. F-7. Community Programs. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know how to say this properly but I believe the Youth Identity Development Strategy was tabled in the House in 2003 and it's going to be updated in 2008-09. I want to know what the status is and if it's ready. Will you be tabling it this session or in the spring session? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In regard to his question, there will be some youth arriving to Iqaluit next week and they will be having discussions with NTI.

I believe that, Mr. Speaker, in the spring session, we will be able to present our plans on how we envision the future, including some suggestions or recommendations that have been made, and we're expecting to table that in the spring session, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it and we will want to see that. I don't want to repeat what Mr. Curley said but we don't want to hear just lip service. If it's just written down, very little will be accomplished. We must assist our youth because parents are working nowadays, so they're only getting educated through the education system.

My question is: once you table the strategy in the spring, will you make the hamlets and other organizations who deal with youth aware of what the government has planned for this strategy? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, we will inform them of the strategy after the meeting. I believe that the strategy has been worked on since 2004 and we would like to table a more detailed version in the House at the spring session, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In the appendix under Summary of Grants and Contributions, there are two items - one is the Grants for Youth Initiatives, \$150,000, and the other one is the Contributions for Youth Initiatives, \$100,000. Will this funding be used for the youth? Will it make a difference for our youth? Is the funding going to be used to help the youth in their fund-raising? Is this where the funding is coming from? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The contributions are geared towards the communities. We provide grants of \$2,000 annually for every youth council in Nunavut, but they have to apply for other funds and that's how we provide assistance. The youth councils hold teleconferences about once a month and that's what this funding is for, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. F-7. Branch Summary. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you. I would like to ask the minister another question. I wanted to ask this earlier but I haven't had the chance because we're not on the page yet.

We don't know what kind of people will attend the folk school, whether it will be for youth or adults. It would be good to hear who it's for, what kind of programs will be offered, and what it will be really used for. Is there a report in regard to that? Has it been tabled? I have not read anything on that, so when that comes to being, will they have a separate board when it's operating? (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe I tabled what we have done and what we're preparing for the folk school yesterday. It will be for people who are 18 to 26 years of age. The governance model has yet to be finalized by the steering committee and they're currently working on this.

Hopefully, in the near future, they will let us know if they will have a board or if they will be a corporation. Those are the things that are being worked on and those are identified in the update that I presented about what we envision our programs and courses will entail, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley: Thank you. (interpretation) I hope that won't take too long. I would like to thank the minister for his response and I will definitely read it. In my view, it would be good if we can recognize the Inuit culture through legislation and not just through policy. It will benefit our youth in the future and for that reason, I fully support that.

It would be good if you could complete that in the life of this Assembly so that it doesn't just fall off in the next Assembly if it doesn't go through legislation. I will definitely read that report and if at all possible, I would like an update at the spring session.
(interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, I can commit to doing that, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Thanks again, Mr. Curley. F-7. Branch Summary. Community Programs. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$3,267,000. Does this committee agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you very much. F-8. Branch Summary. Sports Nunavut. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$3,843,000. Does this committee agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Back to page F-3. Total Department Summary. Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. Detail of Expenditures. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$18,107,000. Does this committee agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

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

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Thank you, Minister. (interpretation) Do you have any closing remarks? Minister.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): I would like to thank my colleagues for listening to us. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. I would like to thank your staff. We will take five minutes.

>>*Committee recessed at 16:32 and resumed at 16:48*

Chairman: Welcome back. I would now like to ask Minister Tapardjuk of the Department of Human Resources to make his opening remarks. Minister Tapardjuk.

**Bill 23 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2008-2009 –
Consideration in Committee – Human Resources**

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is a pleasure to appear today on behalf of the Department of Human Resources to present the proposed Main Estimates and Business Plan for the Department of Human Resources for 2008-09.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Human Resources has been allocated a budget of \$18 million which is unchanged from the previous two years' budgets. Through the internal reallocations, we have increased our staff compliment from 94 staff to 96.5. This includes 16 internship positions that are assigned to departments as part of our Sivuliqtiksat internship program.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Human Resources is responsible for providing a wide range of human resources services and programs to departments and agencies of the Government of Nunavut. We are committed to providing quality and timely service to our many clients who include management and staff within our public service and Nunavummiut who are looking for employment and development opportunities in the GN.

Mr. Chairman, Inuit representation in the GN has been steadily increasing and at September 30, 2007, beneficiaries represented 51 percent of our workforce. My department continues to build on this momentum by providing departments with tools and support to achieve their Inuit employment goals in such areas as workforce planning and career planning.

At the same time, Mr. Chairman, my department recognizes that over the past year, overall capacity in our workforce has been decreasing. Therefore, recruitment, retention and development of staff must continue to be a priority for this department and the Government of Nunavut as a whole and we must look for new and innovative ways to improve our services and programs in these areas.

About 58 percent, or \$10.4 million, of the department's budget for the fiscal year is allocated to the key areas of staffing, training and development, and Inuit employment.

This budget supports ongoing initiatives that focus on providing employment and development opportunities to beneficiaries, such as the Summer Student Employment Equity Program and the Sivuliqtiksatsat internship program, as well as services designed to improve accessibility to casual employment opportunities. Other key learning programs such as Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun language training, employee and cultural orientation, and occupational training are also supported by this budget.

This coming fiscal year, we will be increasing our participation, employment and career fairs across the territory and nationally. We will also be developing a customized orientation and training program to our managers across the GN so that they have the knowledge, skills and cultural awareness to help their employees succeed in the workplace. We also plan to implement the Inuit Peer Group Program across the GN. This program was developed in 2007 by the Departments of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth and Human Resources, and was established to create a forum for Inuit to share their issues and to make recommendations on workplace issues. Next year, Mr. Chairman, my department will also continue to collaborate with all departments and agencies of the GN to develop new employee recruitment and retention initiatives to increase capacity in our workforce and encourage our valued employees to continue working for the GN.

Mr. Chairman, 10 percent, or \$1.7 million, of my department's budget is allocated to the area of employee relations. This funding enables my department to demonstrate its commitment to *Inuuqatigiittiarniq* through ongoing delivery of the initiatives that improve employees' knowledge of health and wellness matters such as the Employee and Family Assistance Program, workplace safety and conflict resolution. This coming year, an Alternate Dispute Resolution Program will be developed and implemented to provide employees with options to resolve workplace disputes. In the spirit of *Aajiiqatigiinni*, Mr. Chairman, another priority for the coming year is to implement a joint consultation process with the Nunavut Employees Union. The process will provide a forum for the mutual discussions between the union and the GN. We will also be expanding the Employee Recognition Program to recognize outstanding and dedicated performance contributions made by GN employees.

Mr. Chairman, the remaining 32 percent, or \$5.9 million, of the department's budget is allocated to such activities as management of headquarters and regional operations and job evaluation. This coming year, in consultation with stakeholders, we will continue to research and develop a new *Public Service Act* and supporting regulations that incorporate current human resource practices within the GN, Inuit societal values and *Article 23* of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. We will also be introducing a Code of Conduct that will be included in the new *Public Service Act*. The code will identify the standard of conduct that applies to all GN employees.

Mr. Chairman, next year, we plan to automate some of our job evaluation processes, which will enable us to generate information accurately and efficiently. We also committed to continuous improvement of the functioning of the human resources information and payroll system. In addition, we will be expanding the training provided

to staff in departments who are responsible for employee leave and attendance records, and my department will also be conducting a review of leave and attendance policies and procedures to improve leave management throughout the GN.

Mr. Chairman, before I conclude my remarks, I believe it is important for me to emphasize that my department recognizes that improvements can and will be made in how we promote employment opportunities to Nunavummiut and how we communicate with those who apply for positions in our public service. I look forward to updating my colleagues on our efforts in these areas.

Mr. Chairman, our priorities for the coming fiscal year build on the department's past accomplishments and respond to priorities identified in *Pinasuaqtavut*. Our main estimates present the financial resources we will need to carry out our mandate in leading and developing Nunavut's public service and providing human resources services and programs to GN departments and agencies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to answer any questions.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Tapardjuk. (interpretation ends) Do you have witnesses you would like to bring to the table? Minister.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk: Yes, I do.

Chairman: Sergeant-at-Arms, could you please escort the witnesses in.

(interpretation) Welcome, Minister. For the record, please introduce your witnesses. Minister.

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Aluki Rojas, the Deputy Minister of the Department Human Resources, and on my left is Bob Loehr, the Director of Corporate Services within the Department of Human Resources, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Welcome to the Chambers and to Committee of the Whole. Does the Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations have comments? Mr. Peterson.

Mr. Peterson: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Standing Committee on Government Operations and Accountability has scrutinized the proposed 2008-09 Main Estimates and Business Plan of the Department of Human Resources, and I am pleased to provide you with the committee's comments.

The standing committee notes that the proposed 2008-09 budget for the department is \$18,019,000. This is the same amount as was budgeted for the 2007-08 fiscal year. This represents a 66 percent increase over the department's initial 1999-2000 budget allocation of \$10,836,000.

The standing committee notes that the GN's overall vacancy rate continues to remain static at approximately 20 percent. In other words, almost one out of every five positions in the Government of Nunavut remains unfilled on a permanent basis. Approximately 38 percent of the vacant positions are located in Iqaluit, where there are approximately 279 vacancies. A number of other communities also have significant numbers of vacancies. In January of 2000, the Government of Nunavut-wide vacancy rate was approximately 25 percent. It remains unclear if reducing the government's overall vacancy rate to 10 percent is a realistic goal in the short or even medium-term.

The standing committee recognizes that the department has Government of Nunavut-wide responsibilities in the areas of job evaluation and classification. The committee continues to be concerned by what appears to be a high rate of growth in the number of Government of Nunavut positions classified as being in the management category. According to the Government of Nunavut's quarterly Inuit Employment Plan reports, in January of 2000, there were 233 positions across the Government of Nunavut classified as middle management. That number has since grown to approximately 434 positions, an increase of over 86 percent. By contrast, the number of administrative support positions has actually decreased by almost 14 percent in the same period of time.

According to the Government of Nunavut's March 2007 Inuit Employment Plan quarterly report, there were a total of 767 casual employees employed by the Government of Nunavut, of whom 504 were beneficiaries. 381 casuals were employed by the Department of Health and Social Services. In the past, concerns have been raised with respect to the excessive use of casuals to fill positions on a long-term basis.

The standing committee is supportive of efforts to ensure that casual hiring concentrates on bringing Inuit into the Government of Nunavut's workforce, while being mindful of the importance of adhering to provisions in the collective agreement with the NEU with respect to such issues as eligibility for benefits after the passage of specified periods of time.

The standing committee also notes that the department has implemented a number of recommendations from its recent audit of the casual staffing process. Other changes are on hold until the resolution of collective bargaining with the Nunavut Employees Union.

Mr. Chairman, the department's 2008-09 business plan indicates that "policy work and legislative drafting are almost complete" for a new *Public Service Act*. It is anticipated that new legislation will be introduced during the Third Legislative Assembly. The business plan also indicates that two of the department's priorities for 2008-09 are to "introduce a new code of conduct for GN employees and provide associated orientation sessions and training resources" and to "develop a comprehensive implementation plan for the *Public Service Act*."

The standing committee supports the Nunavut Employees Union and the Nunavut Teachers' Association having a meaningful involvement in the development of the

legislation. The committee has also noted the minister's commitment to fully consider the issue of whistle-blower protection in the development of a new *Public Service Act*. The idea of reintroducing binding arbitration into the Government of Nunavut's collective bargaining process continues to warrant careful consideration.

The standing committee also notes that the most recent annual reports of the Integrity Commissioner of Nunavut to the Legislative Assembly have recommended that senior Government of Nunavut officials be subjected to the same legislated standards of ethical conduct as ministers and MLAs. The standing committee looks forward to the new statute providing for a public service code of conduct and clear conflict of interest rules.

The Government of Nunavut pays an annual bilingual bonus to some employees. According to the 2004-05 Public Service Annual Report, 421 Government of Nunavut employees received a \$1,500 per year bilingual bonus. According to the 2006-07 Public Service Annual Report, 787 Government of Nunavut employees received a bilingual bonus as of March 31, 2007. 777 of these employees received the bonus for proficiency in Inuktitut.

According to the department's 2006-07 business plan, a draft of a new Language Incentive Policy had been completed. Subsequent ministerial correspondence to the standing committee indicated that no new initiatives in this area have been approved, as a consequence of the Government of Nunavut's fiscal restraint measures.

The standing committee supports measures to compensate for and encourage the use of the Inuit language in the workplace, especially with respect to frontline positions that directly serve the public. The standing committee also encourages the department to work towards the design and implementation of objective and standardized tests for evaluating language proficiency within the public service.

Mr. Chairman, the department prepares a quarterly report on employment across the Government of Nunavut entitled *Towards a Representative Public Service*. Quarterly reports for June and September of 2007 were not tabled in the Legislative Assembly until February 26, 2008. The standing committee urges the minister to table these important reports in a timely fashion.

Mr. Chairman, the standing committee notes the department's focus on the Government of Nunavut's Inuit Employment Plan. According to the department's own IEP statistics, 888 beneficiaries were employed by the Government of Nunavut in January of 2000. A total of 1,492 beneficiaries were employed in March 2007, an increase of 68 percent.

Members also note that the government has set a target date of March 31, 2010 for 56 percent or more of all positions across all occupational categories to be filled by beneficiaries. This is an ambitious goal, given that several hundred new beneficiary employees will need to be hired in order to achieve it and in light of the implications of the Government of Nunavut's turnover rate of 16 percent in 2006-07, which reflected the

departure of 474 employees from the Government of Nunavut during the course of the year.

The standing committee notes that the middle management and professional occupational categories presently have the lowest levels of beneficiary employment. Members urge the department to continue its efforts to work in partnership with other entities to secure training investments from the federal government in order to help us achieve our long-term *Article 23* goal of building a representative, qualified and professional public service.

Mr. Chairman, a revised Priority Hiring Policy was tabled in the House by the Minister of Human Resources on November 28, 2005. On November 5, 2007, the minister made a statement in the Legislative Assembly to announce the extension of the policy to March of 2010.

The Priority Hiring Policy provides that beneficiaries who meet the qualifications of a given job have priority over all other candidates. Prior to division, territorial affirmative action policies also gave preferential status to women, long-term residents of the territory and other categories of persons, such as the disabled.

In September 2005, Cabinet approved a new process for use by the Staffing Division of the Department of Human Resources. The process provides for the consideration of current Government of Nunavut employees as well as Nunavut residents with a minimum of one calendar year residency before applicants from other jurisdictions. There is no change to the Priority Hiring Policy that provides first and foremost consideration to qualified beneficiaries of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement.

During the Legislative Assembly's scrutiny of the 2007-08 main estimates and departmental business plans, the standing committee noted that, "The Government of Nunavut's own system of employee recognition provides long-term service awards to public servants who have been with the government for at least five years. This benchmark would appear to be a better starting point for determining who constitutes a long-term Northerner, rather than just one year of residency." The standing committee continues to urge the minister to review this issue.

Members continue to note with concern the persistent gender gap in the public service. According to the Government of Nunavut's most recent annual reports on the public service, 304 beneficiary males and 775 beneficiary females were employed by the Government of Nunavut in March of 2004. In March of 2007, there were 360 beneficiary males and 934 beneficiary females employed by the Government of Nunavut. The recruitment challenges in this area are clearly linked to such broad social issues as levels of educational attainment.

Mr. Chairman, the standing committee strongly supports the Government of Nunavut's Summer Student Employment Equity Program. This program provides employment opportunities and valuable work experience in Government of Nunavut departments for

Nunavut youth. Over 1,000 students, approximately 75 percent of whom were beneficiaries, have participated in this program since 2001.

The standing committee noted with concern that the number of students participating in the program decreased from 207 in the summer of 2006 to 172 in the summer of 2007. This program is critical for mentoring the next generation of Nunavut professionals and leaders, and the standing committee would support the reallocation of resources from other areas of expenditure to ensure the continued success of this program.

The standing committee also supports efforts on the part of the department to work with municipalities to provide summer employment opportunities for students living in smaller communities with a less significant Government of Nunavut presence than the regional centres and decentralized communities.

Mr. Chairman, the issue of workforce morale and well-being is important. Although the standing committee notes with approval that the Government of Nunavut's turnover rate decreased from 31 percent in 2000 to 16 percent in 2006-07, the issue of workplace absenteeism in the Government of Nunavut appears to remain a problem. The committee has noted that the department is working on an attendance management program to address this issue. It is noteworthy that the number of active grievances decreased from 117 as of March 31, 2006 to 91 as of March 31, 2007.

The standing committee also notes that the department's 2008-09 business plan indicates that its priorities for 2008-09 include implementing Joint Consultation Committees with the Nunavut Employees Union and the Nunavut Teachers' Association, implementing an alternative dispute resolution process for the Government of Nunavut and developing a process to improve the resolution of new grievances.

The impact of the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy on employee recruitment and retention across the government must be rigorously evaluated. Past ministerial correspondence to the standing committee revealed that the Government of Nunavut's exit interview surveys are now addressing this issue. The Nunavut Housing Corporation's 2008-09 Business Plan indicates that the "NHC has prepared a One-Year Staff Housing Review and will continue to monitor the Staff Housing Policy in consultation with the Department of Human Resources."

It is important that the government review this issue objectively and report its findings to the Legislative Assembly so that all MLAs may have a clear picture of the situation. It is also critical that the government evaluate whether or not the policy is actually achieving its stated goal of "addressing Nunavut's ongoing housing shortage by supporting a strong, private sector led housing market in Nunavut."

Mr. Chairman, the Government of Nunavut's collective agreement with the Nunavut Employees Union expired on September 30, 2006. The standing committee has been concerned with the slow pace of negotiations to date. The committee will be monitoring with attention the progress towards a new collective agreement that is fair to employees

and affordable to the government. The standing committee notes that the NEU publicly and frequently communicates its position on the negotiations. It is important that the government also communicate its own position in a clear and candid manner to MLAs, employees and the public.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening comments. Individual members may have their own concerns and comments as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

Mr. Alagalak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank Minister Tapardjuk. Perhaps, if you put on a different hat, I would recognize you because you still look like the Minister of the Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth. Welcome.

I know that this department is very important to the Inuit and the public. I'm very proud of the fact that you are the minister. I would also like to be able to read Inuktitut just like you because I envy your ability to read Syllabics.

I know that this Department of Human Resources is very difficult, especially when you are trying to hire people. Lots of people apply for a job when they believe that they are capable of doing that job when there is a job opportunity. Some people apply just solely to get a job and when they apply for a job, they automatically think that they got the job. I know that there are various ideas going on out in the public.

I know that when the applicants are given some letters, whether they will be interviewed, or whether they will not be interviewed, they don't understand that they don't qualify because of their education level. I spoke about this issue in the past. An individual, an Inuk, when they apply for a job, they automatically think that they got the job. They need qualifications and an education without thinking about the qualifications for that job. I know that this will eventually be done properly because more and more students are finishing high school.

I believe that, as regular members, we have to work with the constituents when they apply for jobs in Nunavut. For example, there are a lot of constituents that are quite disappointed even though they applied for a job. When they wait for a long time without a response after they applied for a job they get concerned. They get concerned because they're not part of the people that will be interviewed.

It's evident that when you're educated, you know that if you don't qualify for that job, that you don't get that job. A lot of people tend to think otherwise. I know that it would be easier for the Department of Human Resources if they can provide the policy to the public out there.

If an individual, whoever applied for a job, if they don't qualify for the job, they should be notified of the fact that they don't qualify. Any Inuk or any beneficiary can apply for a job. At least provide a policy to the Inuit out there with the weaknesses and requirements of the competition. These competitions always state what you should be qualified for or what your level of education should be.

You should at least provide that information to the public out there and not just with job opportunities. I believe that they will be more interested in educating themselves or going for higher education. I believe that this will help the public to seek higher education when they apply for a job and don't understand why they don't qualify. They start losing hope and they don't want to reapply again when there are more job opportunities out there.

With that, I know that we will be going through the main estimates for this department but I wanted to make that general comment. I would also like to welcome you and your officials. If it wasn't for your department, we would have less staff within the Government of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. (interpretation ends) General comments. I have no more members on my list for general comments. We will now proceed to the page-by-page review of the departmental estimates starting with page D-4. Branch Summary. Directorate. Total Operations and Maintenance. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you. I have a question on page D-4. When the co-chair delivered his opening comments, he mentioned that they're working on the code of conduct and it's also stated in the business plan that the code of conduct will be established for the staff. So what's the status of it and when are you going to table the code of conduct in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The employees of the government need a code of conduct and that's what we're talking about. We also want to incorporate the code of conduct into the *Public Service Act*. All deputy ministers have reviewed it and they have also looked into how best it would be set up to be used for the public service. For example, if there was a problem at work, how could you resolve the situation?

We have a code of conduct but we need to review it again and it has to be reviewed by the Cabinet. After it gets approval from Cabinet, then we will be able to table it in the House, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley: Thank you. (interpretation) I believe that this is going to be a policy and I believe that that is going to help give the policy some teeth.

I want the minister to respond. We started talking about this issue last year, so why is it so difficult to set it up? What's the real reason why it's taking it so long? (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you. This has been reviewed. They have reviewed not just the code of conduct but also reviewed how to resolve problems with employees, such as conflict of interest and we have to identify the conflict of interest, and also, the money. If this individual is working outside of the government, everything has to be detailed.

We have been accumulating all that information and they have been collecting everything into the *Public Service Act*. I think that's one of the reasons why it is taking so long to prepare this policy and right now, it's being continually reviewed by the Department of Justice and the Department of Human Resources. While we're working on the *Public Service Act*, we have to abide by other legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to thank the minister. Yes, I see it eventually coming out in the future.

The Integrity Commissioner's annual report raised the issue of conflict of interest guidelines for senior officials, so I would like to ask another question in that regard. There doesn't seem to be conflict of interest guidelines for Cabinet, although the Assembly has guidelines. We don't seem to have conflict of interest guidelines for senior officials coming from the Premier's Office.

It became evident that this was your weakness because we only have the Integrity Commissioner's conflict of interest guidelines. Is the Premier's Office included in this guideline or is this guideline just for senior officials? (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have not had this reviewed by the EIA because it's been worked on by the EIA. We will definitely have to review this because it also involves the senior secretariat to the highest senior officials. We can ask them if they can give us any ideas or what we should start considering in there through discussion, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When the department was developing the conflict of interest guidelines for the *Conflict of Interest Act*, can you indicate the different guidelines, such as the guideline for the Hay Plan, or individually? I know that there will be some that stand alone, so if you could speak to this issue.

The reason why I have spoken to this during our review of CGS under committee, as an example, under Technical Services as well as in regard to staff who worked under Transportation, we find that in several cases, as soon as they have left the department, they score a big contract shortly after they leave their position.

Due to these circumstances and others like it, this seems to be an urgent matter since we, as a government, seem to just be pouring funds into consultants' reports. It seems like the consultants get big contracts because a lot of money is being used. Once they leave the government, they automatically get into consulting and they're contracted out. Will they be treated as individual cases, such as senior and junior employees? (interpretation ends)
Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are currently reviewing the *Public Service Act*. There are different contents including a code of conduct for conflict of interest. We will definitely look at it in different ways through aside from the *Public Service Act*. We can consider this as a Cabinet and we have try and find out with the different departments, especially EIA, on how we can deal with them. I'm committed to reviewing this, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you. While you're working on the *Public Service Act*, have you considered what the committee members have asked when it comes to the whistle-blower as it became evident that the Crown corporations need whistle-blowers?

We have some different problems and one employee who had worked for only two years had an overtime amounting to over \$50,000. This sort of thing is not right, even though people knew about it. If there's misconduct, these people are afraid to say anything because there's no whistle-blower protection. So I wonder if there have been some improvements in that area, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you. If somebody suspects or knows that their boss is not doing what he's supposed to be doing, we have talked about and looked at how the person can go to the upper level to report on any abuse or problems. We have

considered whether we should put it in the *Public Service Act* and we will be considering if it should be included in there.

Even if that employee is doing well, the supervisor or manager might not be happy with what that employee is doing, so we want them protected and we want that within the guidelines. I would like to state that this will definitely have to be dealt with by the Cabinet and maybe we can think about how to deal with that problem in the future.

It was mentioned earlier that maybe we should come up with an ombudsman or a mediator if they can't agree. Those are the things that we have looked at and we will let our colleagues know as to which way we are progressing, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The other question that I have: do you feel that there will be whistle-blower protection included in those guidelines that are being developed? Will it come about? (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, we try and work on this with the public servants. We're trying to include *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* and how the Inuit dealt with problems as they will also be affected in how they can operate. We have to deal with the whistle-blower protection, or do we have to look at how the Inuit used to deal with this? We have to review the whistle-blower protection. Is it best just to leave it alone or do we have to review it? How can we best utilize the Inuit culture if there are complaints? Those are the things that we are looking at, Mr. Chairman.

Within *Public Service Act*, I want you to know that we want to incorporate Inuit culture and how it can be incorporated in there. We have a goal of 85 percent Inuit employment, so we are trying to decide how it would be best to deal with this and we are working hard on this, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you. I have a question on a different topic. There hasn't been an agreement with the union due to financial reasons. For that reason, can something such as binding arbitration be included in there if the negotiations are not successful and you had to select a mediator? I wonder if that could be included in the *Public Service Act*, and if not, why not? (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): I wonder how I can respond to that. I don't particularly want to put it in there because I feel that we have to study or review it to see

what the best way is in dealing with disagreements between the government and the union. So we are reviewing to see if that should be included in the *Public Service Act*.

At this time, we are on mediation. When the union is this way and the government is that way, the mediator could say to the union, "What you're asking for is too much," or say to the government, "You're not providing enough." We are waiting for our mediator to do that and after they review it, then we will be able to decide which way we want to go.

We will look at the binding arbitration under the *Public Service Act*, but we are trying to look at other ways of how it can be best dealt with - if we want to try different ways that haven't been used before, or if we feel that some things will definitely have to go ahead. Those are things that we want to consider, but at this time, I can't say exactly what the decision will be, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One of the things that have been raised during Committee of the Whole under HR is I believe the negotiations have been going on for over a year and they haven't had a contract for about a year. It's not acceptable that they can't come to an agreement because they don't have much time.

They should have more time to come up with an agreement and agree with what they're asking. This is just the path. We're not saying to go their way right now but when the public service doesn't have a contract, it's not right. Housing allowances are not adequate. If they go on strike, it could be for a long time and that wouldn't be acceptable. For that reason, we have to possibly use binding arbitration because then the government would be more believable if there's no other way.

I don't find it acceptable that there hasn't been an agreement on the contract negotiations for over a year. What other alternatives do you have? I don't think there's much but you have to consider this very seriously, Mr. Minister, and if you don't want to put that in there, why not? (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Yes, it's taking a long time to come up with an agreement. What we wanted to do was that if we had come up with an agreement, then we were going to start negotiating for it.

The reason we're a little hesitant for a binding arbitration is that you have to go this way and you can't go any other way. Whether we agree with it or not, we would have to go along with it. The arbitrator might not go with what the employees union is seeking and that can create some conflict on both sides. So that's one of the reasons why we are kind of hesitant to go through that route. There might be a better way, so we're trying to look at other ways.

I would like to say that, Mr. Chairman, within the department, we will definitely try and come up with an agreement with the union, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Maybe if I ask you this question: can you indicate to this House why the union and the GN cannot agree with anything to date? I think I'll get an adequate response if I make it short. (interpretation ends) Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): We still are quite a bit apart with our negotiations. We have not received a response from the union with respect to housing allowances, obviously an important issue.

After the government made an announcement on housing subsidies on January 1, 2008 and the subsidy for employees who own their own homes of \$400, we still haven't heard from the union on what their response is on that issue.

In financial terms, it's perhaps the most important issue the union is not able to agree on. For example, if you work for an X number of years, you could become eligible for a bonus of an X amount. This issue is one of the most important reasons why we have not been able to reach an agreement with the union, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you Minister. Mr. Curley.

Mr. Curley: Thank you. (interpretation) We want to make it clear since we have to be as fair as we can to our employees here in Nunavut - our teachers, nurses and elsewhere in the public service within the GN. They work very hard and so we need to come to an agreement with them to show that we support them.

Personally, I believe the \$400 subsidy for employees housing is too low. I would actually increase it, maybe for the second year, and increase it a little bit more if they're going to be here for another year or so.

That's just a comment for the reason that... if I were to say it in English, don't make the agreement so that (interpretation ends) the only tool you have is to hold your breath until your face turns completely blue and then one of you would finally give up and burst, or implode, for all that matter. That appears to be the only tool available for the government right now.

I think that it's important that you come to an agreement and the sooner the better. Otherwise, the senior public service will start leaving, exodus, and find jobs somewhere else. Many are probably doing that right now. I ask the minister to try and work as hard

as he can, be reasonable and come to an agreement while the Assembly is sitting. Thank you.

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

Hon. Louis Tapardjuk (interpretation): Thank you. A mediator will be assisting us in determining when we can announce a new agreement. We don't know when that will be because it depends on what the union is willing to accept and what the government is willing to offer. Once the mediator hears from both sides, he will then submit his report.

Of course, the government will carefully examine that report. We will look at what areas we would have to make changes to. We would then have to go back to the Financial Management Board if what the mediator proposes goes far beyond what we are willing to agree to. We are very mindful of this issue. Naturally, we will be very open-minded of the mediator's report and take what he proposes seriously, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister. Mr. Curley, your time has expired. I have Mr. Arvaluk on the list. Mr. Arvaluk.

Mr. Arvaluk (interpretation): I have many questions to ask, but I move to report progress. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Arvaluk. We have a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour of the motion. Those opposed. The motion is carried.

Before I rise to report progress, I thank you, minister. We will be getting back to page D-4 on the Directorate tomorrow. I will now rise to report progress.

Speaker (interpretation): Members, please be seated. Going back to the Orders of the Day. Item 20. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Evyagotailak.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

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

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Thank you, Minister Brown. The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. Item 22. Orders of the Day. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. A reminder that there's a meeting of the Management and Services Board in the Tuktu Boardroom tomorrow starting at 9:30 in the morning.

Orders of the Day for March 5:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Reports of Standing and Special Committees
12. Reports of Committees on the Review of Bills
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions
 - Motion 28 – 2(4)
17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
 - Bill 23
 - Bill 24
 - Bill 25
20. Report of the Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I would like to remind you that we have an invitation after we leave the House. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, March 5, at 1:30 in the afternoon.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 18:00*

