



**Nunavut Canada**

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NUNAVUT**

**Nunavut Leadership Forum:**

Official Report

**Day 1**

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**Members Present**

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

**Nunavut Leadership Forum**

**Chairman** (Peter Kilabuk) (interpretation): Thank you. I would like to ask Mr. Netser to lead us in prayer.

>>*Prayer*

**Chairman** (interpretation): Members prior to commencing with the Nunavut Leadership Forum, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to our late Speaker, the Honourable Jobie Nutarak. A number of members were present for the memorial ceremony that was held in April in the Chamber. I would like to express our collective thanks to the Member for High Arctic for delivering the tribute on that day.

I would now ask all of those present in the Chamber today to remain standing for a minute of silence.

>>*Silence*

They cannot hear on Channel 1, the floor. Can you hear the floor? Can you hear Channel 2; is that good? And also, the last Channel 3, and also Channel 4; can you hear Channel 4? Thank you. Can we proceed now?

My question was: do members agree that we can proceed? Members, do you agree?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. Members, as your replacement as the Speaker, I am very pleased to be here. I am honoured to preside over this week's Leadership Forum. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all members back to the House for these important proceedings, and our upcoming spring sitting.

As members will recall, the Second Legislative Assembly took office in 2004 following the general election. In February of that year, the House, by way of a motion, agreed to hold a mid-term Leadership Review during the life of this Assembly.

I would note that a number of members present today were also in this chamber when the First Legislative Assembly of Nunavut conducted its mid-term Leadership Review in the

fall of 2001. In our consensus style of government, the Premier and members of the Executive Council are chosen by the members of this House and are accountable to the Legislative Assembly, as a whole.

The practice of holding a formal Leadership Review began during the First Legislative Assembly. All members have again agreed to hold a mid-term Leadership Review of the Executive Council during the life of the Second Legislative Assembly.

Recognizing that the Members of Cabinet are accountable to the Legislative Assembly as a whole for the performance of their duties, this review provides the opportunity for regular members to pose questions to the ministers on their performance since taking office in the year 2004.

As one of the members who participated in the leadership review held during the First Legislative Assembly, I would like to offer a few observations on this process. Many Nunavummiut will be following our proceedings this week with interest and attention.

I believe that they have high expectations for both regular members and the Cabinet as a whole. I believe that they expect us to focus our deliberations more on Nunavut-wide priorities, on issues of ministerial performance and accountability, and not just to specific grievances or the status of complaints raised by individual residents.

While accountability requires that strong answers be given to tough questions, I would encourage all members to focus their attention on matters of performance and not personality.

Every one of us took a solemn oath of office when we assumed our positions as members of Legislative Assembly. I am confident that we will demonstrate this week that we are truly working together in the best interest of Nunavut as a whole.

All members have been provided with a copy of detailed procedures for the conduct of this midterm leadership review. These procedures have been agreed to at the caucus. Following the Premier's opening statement; the members will have an opportunity to pose questions.

At the conclusion of the Premier's appearance, we will proceed to minister's opening statements and questions. The order of the ministers' appearance has been determined by a random draw. I would like to take this opportunity to remind all members that I will be vigorously enforcing the rules of order and decorum that members have agreed to follow for this process.

With that, I would now like to invite the Premier to make an opening statement. Thank you. Mr. Premier.

### **Opening Statement by Premier Okalik**

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon.

I would like to thank the members for coming in, even though some of them are arriving a little bit, but I'm very thankful that we are able to meet here. My colleagues, and all Nunavummiut, it is very important to be here as the Premier.

We will hear what has gone ahead, and we still have a lot of business to cover. For that, first of all, I would like to thank my colleagues for electing me as the Premier for Nunavut.

I have had the privilege of traveling to every community in our territory. I have seen first hand the good that our government can achieve if we build the conditions for Nunavummiut to succeed.

In my case it was the good people of Iqaluit West who gave me the chance to serve Nunavut. I thank them for their patience as I try my best to represent all Nunavummiut. All of us here owe a debt to our constituents and it is a debt best repaid through hard work and dedication.

We have all contributed to strengthening Nunavut and we can take pride in our accomplishments. However our pride must be tempered with the knowledge that much more needs to be done. As Inuit we are resourceful, respectful, and determined; we can use these attributes to take on our challenges.

It is these same skills and determination that resulted in the *Nunavut Land Claims Agreement*. As one of the negotiators of the agreement I know that my efforts are guided by the same beliefs that I brought to the table more than twenty years ago. What Inuit fought for, and won, in the land claims process is reflected in the objectives that we as MLAs agreed to in Arviat in September 2004.

We set two overall priorities. We reached consensus on building a stronger cultural foundation based on Inuit societal values and we chose to focus on expanding our economy.

As Premier, I have supported my fellow Ministers in addressing these two priorities and the objectives listed in *Pinasuaqtavut*. Minister Picco has my full support for his emphasis on the creation of a Made-in-Nunavut *Education Act*, just as Minister Tapardjuk has my support in developing an *Inuit Language Protection Act* and amending the *Official Languages Act*.

These are important initiatives that build a stronger cultural foundation based on Inuit societal values.

As Premier I, too, have achieved some success in efforts to strengthen our culture and economy. With your support, I was able to secure \$40 million in new federal funding through the Northern Strategy negotiations with the federal government. Half of this

amount has been approved for culture. We have set aside \$10 million for an Inuit cultural school and \$10 million for a heritage centre.

A strong culture supports the success of our people.

(interpretation ends) Our other main priority is strengthening our economy and I am pleased to say there are some encouraging signs. I want to thank Minister Akesuk and his predecessors David Simailak and Peter Kilabuk for their leadership on economic development.

I made a pledge to my constituents during the last election to reduce unnecessary regulations that impede business development. Our government is now consulting with the private sector and our public service will respond to their suggestions.

I would also like to think that the positive business friendly image of Nunavut that I have delivered across our country and overseas is paying dividends. Our economy is on the verge of a new era, driven by the mining sector.

Mineral-related spending in Nunavut has increased from \$35 million in 1999 to more \$200 million this year. We now have the Jericho Diamond Mine in production. Miramar Minerals is tentatively scheduled to begin in 2007. Cumberland Resources is in the permitting process and they hope to have a gold mine operating north of Baker Lake by 2008.

Wolfden Resources is working towards a major development that could include a road and port in the Kitikmeot. There is renewed interest in the north Baffin with the world class high-grade iron ore deposits located at Mary River.

Our Northern Strategy Funds are also helping to prepare us for the rapid growth that we are poised to experience. Again with your support we have allocated \$20 million for economic expansion initiatives; \$5 million of that has been targeted for non-decentralized communities.

We have also agreed that \$5 million will be spent promoting environmental protection with an emphasis on initiatives that contribute to the economy. The remaining \$10 million will be invested in a trades training school in Rankin Inlet.

I know these investments will pay off. We have a track record to prove that Nunavummiut will succeed when given a chance. We invested in education and schools. And we now have record numbers of high school graduates. From the support we provided we can now look to Inuit teachers, trades people, law school graduates and nurses to help us build our future.

(interpretation) During the land claims negotiations we fought for a government that would be representative of the public it serves. We are still fighting for that today. We

need 85 percent of the public service to be Inuit. We are more than halfway to that goal and are following education and employment strategies to keep us moving forward.

The work of the *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit Katimajit* and *Tuttarviit* are crucial to this effort. However, as Thomas Berger pointed out in his review of the land claims implementation, we need a committed federal partner.

I have already had a few occasions to meet with Prime Minister Harper and Minister Prentice. They know that I will pursue Mr. Berger's recommendations on federal support for Inuit training dollars and for a devolution agreement.

We also have the full support of Premiers from across the country. Through forums such as the Western Premiers' Conference, which we will host next year in Iqaluit, and the Council of the Federation I have been able to win support for Nunavut's cause amongst my fellow Premiers.

There is now a national consensus on the need to "close the gap" in social and economic conditions that separates aboriginals from our fellow Canadians. By building non-partisan support amongst leaders from coast-to-coast-to-coast we are building awareness and momentum.

National support for devolution and education are needed so that we can become full partners in Canada and benefit from the wealth of our land and the product of our labour. We have committed the resources to enable us to move forward. On education and the Berger Report, we have formed a federal-territorial working group to examine ways to move this issue forward. We have, and will continue, to show our commitment to education and we expect the federal government to do the same.

On devolution our government has appointed a chief negotiator and we have a commitment that the federal government will soon have the same. NTI will be a full partner in these negotiations and I look forward to the results from this relationship.

(interpretation ends) Our partnership with NTI is important and productive. The Inuit Housing Strategy is a good example. Along with ITK we made the federal government understand the dire need for housing in Nunavut. Both in Kelowna and in the last federal budget, our efforts helped secure significant dollars for Nunavut.

The \$200 million won't solve our housing crisis but it's an important step in the right direction and proof of what can be achieved when we work together.

(interpretation) This theme of working together brings me to my comments as Minister of Justice. Either through firsthand experience or through our families or neighbours we all know the difficulties that Inuit have experienced with an outside legal system. However, now, rather than fighting the system, we are re-writing the system in our own likeness and in doing so we are bringing justice closer to our communities.

By working with the RCMP, we have increased the number of Inuit officers. We still have some way to go, but we are increasing the cultural sensitivity of policing in Nunavut. Through the provision of policing services throughout our territory we are increasing security in our communities.

This helps to set the stage for greater community-based justice, with local Justices of the Peace and Community Justice Committees.

When our session opens, I will introduce the *Family Abuse Prevention Act*, legislation which I hope will empower Nunavummiut to take more control of the violence in their communities.

We are also providing an increased community presence through initiatives such as the Family Mediation Program in Cape Dorset, the Human Rights Tribunal in Coral Harbour, and the new healing corrections model in Kugluktuk.

I agree with many of you that our laws need to be changed to be more reflective of Nunavut's culture and current realities. The Department of Justice has drafted 35 Acts and 62 Regulations in this term of government alone. All of our Acts are now entirely translated into Inuktitut, making our laws more accessible to all Nunavummiut.

Many of the statutes recommended to the Assembly by Justice will help individuals regulate their financial matters. Legislation like the *Electronic Commerce Act*, *Powers of Attorney Act*, and amendments to the *Wills Act* and *Exemptions Act* are also important in meeting our commitment to strengthening economic development.

(interpretation) It is crucial that Inuit be deeply involved in guiding our justice system. Inuit employment numbers in the Justice Department have increased by eight percent over the last two years. Greater Inuit participation in guiding and creating all aspects of our government is the result of leadership that is committed to creating the opportunities to succeed.

We have had many successes, but much more needs to be done.

I am ready to complete that work and I ask for your continued support and confidence both in me and in the members you have elected as Ministers in our government. Thank you.

>>Applause

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. I will now call on the Premier to proceed to the witness table. Mr. Premier.

Thank you, Mr. Premier. I would like to remind the members that the regular members may make a statement not exceeding five minutes in response to the Premier. Do any



regular members wish to make a statement? I would like to remind the members again that you cannot exceed five minutes to respond to the Premier. Mr. Curley.

### **Replies to Opening Statement**

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have to get Channel 1 fixed because it's not working. Possibly, it can be fixed during our break.

First of all, I would like to welcome all members and I'm very glad to see everybody here because it's spring. The people of Keewatin are very busy going out camping and drying meat.

I would like to apologize this morning, I think I missed out on three hours, Mr. Chairman, if I was from Baffin and if there were three members not here, I would have postponed that meeting so that everybody would be able to participate and be on the same level as everybody else.

The ministers can't be running the show. We should be able to agree to make sure that there's full participation by all members. I just wanted to make that comment first of all, Mr. Chairman, in regard to the Premier's speech.

I'm very thankful that we are able to have levered a lot of money, but then again, we can't run by money alone. There are other values that are appreciated and there's high unemployment out there.

We have to make sure that we represent all peoples. There are people who are not working for the government and because of that, we will have to make sure that these issues are covered. We can't only concentrate on economic development and businesses; we have to think about the elders, the families, the women, and the children. I'm not sure how we can do that, but I would like to focus on the real people of Nunavut.

We do go to Ottawa and to other southern provinces, but we have to represent all; we can't only have a meeting with the hamlets, there's the organizations who have the money and the employment and they can just pick up a phone and they're not concerned, and they can talk to anybody.

We now have a government where sometimes they only meet with groups and it shouldn't be like that. There are some people who cannot attend and the ministers should make an effort to meet with those individuals.

Yes, we realize that the ministers have to travel around and I don't know who handles that. Sometimes when we write letters to the ministers, sometimes we don't even get a response. So it's very difficult to tell whether we are going to get a response or not. There has to be improvement in that area and I can say that when we don't know if the ministers are working.

I think the majority of them are on holidays then they do work for the department because if we were to make a break down as to how many days they spent here and that kind of information we might be asking. For example, the department staff do not make decisions on their own and they have to go see the ministers on a daily basis, and we want to emphasize that this be followed. A lot of times there are emergencies where things are urgent and they have to be in the offices regularly. That is what I want to say for now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. They were still working with the earphones; I hope it is fixed now. Under statements, is there any of the regular members that wish to make a statement? Mr. Alagalak, and then, my apologies, we are giving every member five minutes to make a statement and we won't be making responses to the statements that were made. Mr. Alagalak.

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can hear myself through the earphones so I am going to take this up. Of all the voices, my voice is the worst. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am very happy to be here, we have tried really hard to come here last night, and I told John that I wanted to walk over here.

I do not think I would have been here on time, or in this lifetime, but I am very happy or glad to be here to see everybody and I am very glad that everybody was able to attend and at the same time we are still missing someone. I know it is going to take a while but under the statements we have to look at considering all the communities, there are so many communities in Nunavut, a lot of times the government focuses on a select few that are in Nunavut.

We are all still supposed to be looking at the whole Nunavut, for example, in our community our population is growing and it is one of the largest, and a lot of times our person behind them is not assisting our community as well as they should, and there are people in our community who wish to talk to the government but they come to our constituency offices.

We try and help them in any way we can so it is more or less a one-way because a lot of times they do not get responses where they are trying to get information from the government or ask assistance or help, even up to now they have regrets that in the fall or winter. Up to now they have not received any response, and it was a problem that was lost, that our government will be close so everything will be dealt with in a shorter time. I realize that you are very busy and I know the Premier is constantly on the go but what was stated before is that the government has to get closer to the community and this is not a reality yet.

Hamlet councils should be assisted to look at the future because at this time there are not visioning the future and only working on issues going on today. They are not looking at what will happen to the community in 10 to 20 years time and what kind of infrastructure they will need by then. This is an area where the hamlets will need assistance and I wanted to point that out.

In our communities there are long-term plans and if they have not been dealt with then we encounter problem when situation arises with municipal water and sewage truck services. We seem to be behind because of the lack of planning and vision. Although there may be a vision they don't always work out as planned. They should be given an opportunity to work with scientist or professional people.

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

**Mr. Tootoo:** I would like to clarify something and want to apologize to the people of Baffin. Earlier, one of the members said that if he was from the Baffin that the meeting would have to be postponed and he is making a very large assumption. There have been cases in the past where people have been late because of weather from all regions and we can't stop just because someone is not there.

I know we discussed this morning the procedures for this meeting and I was very specific to ask the Clerk if any of the members that were not in attendance due to weather this morning had any concerns related to the procedures, and those procedures were sent out a month ago to all members and it indicated that there was no feedback from any of the members that were not there and so we figured that it was no big deal. If feedback was received then we would have thought differently about it, but there wasn't any. So I want to clarify that, I don't want to make assumption why things are done or not done, we have to move forward and work together.

As I get into my comments for the Premier, I think like someone else said that the ministers are running the show and that's why we elected you guys as Cabinet Ministers to run the government. If we have concerns about this, we can do it through our regular sittings, we do it here through this process, and it's something that I'm sure our ministers would agree with me, or that's something I'm very good at doing is making sure that for my part is that the people I put my trust into, and our government are accountable in the decisions that they make or don't make.

I think one of the things that we really need to address and I have seen it change slowly in my time here and as the Premier indicated getting rid of red tape, and we also need to look at a more common sense approach to things, instead of looking for when someone comes up with a good idea about something, or to do something instead of looking for ways and reasons why we can't do it, look for reasons why we can do it.

If you look back, none of us would be here if our ancestors did not say well, we have to do this, how can we do this, what is the best way to do it, and how can we learn from that. I am sure that the first time someone tried something it did not work quite perfectly, but they learned from it and they moved forward and it persevered and they are still here. I think that that is how I see a government should be moving forward to a young government as only a second term and nobody is perfect.

We need to not be afraid to make mistakes, we need to work together for the best interests of all Nunavummiut and put aside egos, put aside personalities because when we are in here and when we are doing our jobs that that is how we should be looking at it. I think that it's important.

I think that Nunavut would like to see a unified, strong Cabinet working together and our job is, as regular members on this side of the House, to make sure that that happens because only with that type of cohesiveness of working together that we arrive and move forward successfully.

I see that happening, it does not happen over night. I would like to see things done quicker, but as long as we keep that goal in mind and it's a message, I'm not going to say it to each of the ministers, I'm saying it once. But, it's horribly...

**Chairman:** I'm sorry; your time has run out on you. I will go to the next member, Mr. Arreak.

**Mr. Arreak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I too am very pleased to see each and every one of you come back to the session, although I would much prefer to be home during the spring time and be with my family during the spring camping season, but we have to deal with business and I am committed to working on these issues while we are here.

In regard to the Premier's opening statements, we are very interested to hear them because of the government is now becoming accountable. There is a lot of misunderstanding by the public as to how the government operates and I know that the government has to be more visible to the communities.

You do not necessarily have to go to the communities to talk about good things. You can go to the communities and talk about negative views so that government can be more visible to the public in the communities.

Also, in regard to the Premier's comments in regard to the businesses being given more support and assistance and they are now getting rid of their red tape, but regular Inuit like hunters are now experiencing all sorts of rules that are being put on them.

They are the original and treated as if they do not know anything, as if they are uncivilized. That is the tendency to think about hunters by other people, and they impose rules on them rather than using their traditional rules that they know about and they impose these rules that they have no idea about even though we live in Nunavut.

Also, for mining companies in regard to mining, I know that they are starting to use huge sums of funding prior to the devolution being established and I know that our Premier had stated that he's now negotiating; there are negotiations happening now for the economic development, but we need a long-term agreement some time in the future.

Many centralized communities are now starting to get employment opportunities and they are starting to get the infrastructure, but the smaller communities that are not decentralized are now falling behind, and these non-decentralized communities are going further down even though we talk about them.

In the commissioner's opening comments, the statement was made that they would pay attention to the smaller communities, but what's being said, it seems like they forget about those smaller communities once everything has been said. Even though they are smaller communities, they have the same feelings as the larger centres such as Iqaluit. Since Iqaluit is the headquarters, they are now starting to get more infrastructures.

We focus more on our capital, when we do that, the non-decentralized communities, tend to fall behind. We need to work in the smaller communities and develop them further as equal to the decentralized communities and larger centres.

Where is Nunavut now? Many people don't know where we are at now even though we are Nunavummiut. We need to find out exactly where we are and what position we are at with the government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Arreak. Why, you used your time right down to the second. Mr. Kattuk.

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and also my colleagues. I would like to thank them for coming to this meeting. Also, for those members that came around to send me their condolences and sympathies after my father had died, I thank them, but I would like to make a statement on the Premier's speech.

Even though some of these issues have already been raised, I will just talk about the things coming from my mind.

When we first created Nunavut back in 1999, many Inuit were glad to see their own government and that they would use Inuit traditions and culture to run the government, which many Nunavummiut were very proud to see.

But to date, it seems like Nunavut was never created, after all, we still see things that did not improve like the legislation, but is now used by the Nunavut Legislative Assembly; do not include the Inuit way of thinking. First of all, mention the gun registry.

Also, Inuit traditional values cannot be used within the government's operating system even though the smaller communities do want to use their traditional ways to run their government, but we do need to look into this in the future because we wanted to create our own government.

To effectively run our government, we don't necessarily have to run our government just like the federal government, but we should use Inuit values as our foundation to run our

government so that Inuit will feel that they own the government more running the government in their own culture and tradition.

As a Member of the Legislative Assembly, when we want to conduct ourselves in an Inuit traditional way, it's impossible. When we talk to the ministers, we are bombarded with rules, so therefore, that's why it's impossible to use traditional values, and Inuit way.

So some time in the future I would like to see this rectified, and the public of Nunavut were very, very proud to get Nunavut created but many of those individuals are no longer alive today. But first of all, to mention the smaller communities, during the Northwest Territories days they used to mention that once the decentralization is finished and then we'll start focusing more on non-decentralized communities. But this has not occurred.

Our government is not paying any attention, or they're not paying any more attention now. So I believe that they're going to have start considering and thinking about the smaller communities as to...look at them...how, or they will be provided with more assistance because we've never really heard what kind of help forum would go out to the non-decentralized communities.

But our Government of Nunavut had said that once the decentralization was completed that they would focus more on the smaller communities, but this did not occur yet. Perhaps my constituency, I don't know if it's just my constituency experiencing this, but I do want to mention that the ministers are not visiting the communities enough.

They should be showing their faces to the communities because they run the government. The public out there wants to see the government run the government. So therefore, they would like to see the Cabinet members tour the communities more. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to welcome the Premier and the ministers, and my fellow colleagues back to the Legislative Assembly on somewhat of a sad note with the passing of our Speaker. It was a great shock to all of us in the Kitikmeot region.

Like many of my colleagues, they would probably rather be back home. It's a little bit warmer in the Kitikmeot Region this year with the Edmonton Oilers in the play-offs.

>>*Applause*

We're in the play-offs, and I noticed walking around Iqaluit last night that you don't see a lot of Edmonton Oilers' flags. I don't speak too much about the Oilers during the session but I thought I would just take this quick opportunity to mention them.

I think this leadership review is a good exercise. I'm not sure what to expect from the exercise, never the less I think it's a good opportunity. As a first time Member of the Legislative Assembly of course, it's a new experience for me.

I have certain expectations of what we're going to achieve on both sides of the House on behalf of the people we're elected to represent. I think the mid-term review will give us a chance to assess how far we've come since March 2004, achieved in the goals and objectives that we set out for ourselves when we were first elected.

The exercise will also give Nunavummiut in all of our ridings wherever they are in Nunavut, an opportunity to hear from the government about what they've accomplished and what they hope to accomplish in the coming years. There are probably two more years, or two years and a bit. I know a lot of my constituents are really looking forward to media updates from the review process on the outcome of this exercise Leadership Review.

The Premier's opening comments were quite impressive. I know there are many challenges and hurdles in front of us everyday as politicians. As much as we do as ministers and MLAs to try and overcome those difficulties and help people, there seems to be more come up everyday, and it is not an easy task.

I often wonder how the ministers manage to get as much done as they do with the limited resources in the staff and other tools that they need to improve the lives of people in Nunavut. It has got to be tough everyday I am sure. I know as Regular Members of this House, we are kind of looked at as an unofficial opposition. We are tasked by our constituents to hold the government accountable, to point out things that they should do or we feel they should do to improve conditions in Nunavut through new programs and policies to help people.

This is consensus government, so indirectly, we are all working together to support each other. I believe that as a Member of this House, I am hoping that you know that we do ask a lot of tough questions in the past sessions, probably asking tough questions in the coming days and the next session. I hope that the ministers recognize and realize this is something we have to do to get the message out there that lives of Nunavummiut are important to us.

I look forward, over the next few days, to good exchanges with the ministers, I look forward to hearing some of the, well, all of the questions from fellow colleagues and the answers from the ministers. I think again, in closing, Mr. Chairman, that it will be a good exercise and I think we will all benefit from this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. I have no other names on my list. Are there any other general comments by the regular members? All regular members have a total of ten questions each that they can ask the Premier while he is at the witness table.

Regular members are not required to ask all of their questions consecutively. I would like to ask the regular members if they have any questions for the Premier. You can make an indication if you would like to do so. Mr. Barnabas.

### Questions to the Premier

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would also like to welcome the regular members for making it to our meeting. I have very short questions for our Premier, and in the speech that was made by the Premier, possibly the first question that I can post is how *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* is going to be used inside the government.

At the community level we know that the Department of CLEY is given a very small budget, even though *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* is made a high priority by the government, how do you plan to implement *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* within the government with the little budget that is allocated to the Department of CLEY? Thank you, Mr. Chairman

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a very excellent question. Of course *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* is not just the responsibility of one department. The various departments also set aside some funds that will be used for Inuit societal values; we also have *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* committees consisting of elders that we use.

Each department has tried to increase the number of Inuit employment. We also provide training for Inuit employees. I am sure that they're well valued by the department, but I can't really respond to your question, but I can say that each department is responsible for implementing *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* and the government as a whole will work together to make sure that we are implanting *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit*, maybe in the future we can get together and see what we can do as a government to have more inclusion and to find out exactly what we can do so that its fully implemented within the government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Barnabas.

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Moving onto another subject. Since the creation of Nunavut we had a number of deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers that were appointed and there seemed to be quite a number of Inuit deputy ministers and assistant deputy ministers, but today it seems like there is a decline in the numbers.

What is the government going to do about increasing the number of Inuit in the deputy minister and assistant deputy minister levels? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Premier.



**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): We are working very hard. I think we had two deputy ministers when we first started and I believe that there are four now. And of course that's a very low level and we would like to see an increase in future with the assistant deputy ministers we have a number of Inuit. As an assistant deputy minister it is a stepping stone to becoming a deputy minister. We have to make sure that they know how the government runs, but we would like to see more Inuit at that level.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Barnabas.

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Premier, what have been your three most important accomplishments since taking the office as minister in 2004? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The most important accomplishment is the issue of housing. I do know that it can be very valuable to all the people of Nunavut. I have worked extremely hard to make sure that we build more houses. The federal government has set aside \$200 million that will be used exclusively by the Nunavut territory. This is one accomplishment that I know will be of value to the people that we represent.

The next one, again it's towards money, because of course we run by money alone. We have received \$40 million from the federal government.

Again, another one of the most important accomplishments has been the Department of Education. I personally place education as a high value and we have seen an increase of graduates coming out of the schools and I am very proud of the youth who are accomplishing and completing their schooling. It is something that we are very proud of.

These are three of the many accomplishments that we have done since 2004.

**Chairman**: Mr. Barnabas.

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will use the Department of Environment as an example. When we first started, there were ten Inuit employees and to date there are only five that are now working in the Department of Environment; all the rest are non-Inuit.

Since we would like to see more Inuit, what is the government going to do about increasing the number of Inuit employees within the government? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I stated in my speech, our goal is to have 85 percent, and I believe we are at 48 percent. We started out at 41 percent. There has been a sharp increase since we were first created, but of course, there is a lot more we would like to do in order to have a government that is representative of the people that we serve. It is going to be a gradual increase over the years and of course it's too slow at times, but it's something that we are going to keep working on.

We would like to keep training more Inuit that will work for the government. Mr. Tapardjuk has been working extremely hard to make sure that we reach that goal.

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

**Mr. Barnabas** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my last question as I would like to give the other members an opportunity to pose their questions.

It is important that ministers recognize when they can do something differently or better. What is the one thing that you would have done differently as minister since you took office in 2004? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Barnabas. I would like to remind the members you will have the opportunity to ask four more questions.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Is it okay if I just answer part of the question? I am responsible for the deputy ministers and I have made a direction that if deputy ministers are employed within the Government of Nunavut in 2008, then they will have to be able to speak Inuktitut.

It is something that we are working on presently, and once it is completed I am sure that I will be very pleased if the employees start answering my questions in Inuktitut. It was mandatory for us to learn English, so now it's the other side of the table now.

We are going to make sure that our employees are able speak Inuktitut by 2008. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Mr. Barnabas, I believe has concluded his questions. I have no other names on my list. If there's anybody else who would like to ask questions to the Premier, they could do so at this time. No other questions to the Premier? Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Premier for answering those questions for my colleague Mr. Barnabas; they were very interesting questions and answers.

In the Kitikmeot over the years, there's been a feeling that we are being left out in Nunavut, and it's not just a concern that is always in this Assembly, but it was also present in the First Assembly. In my capacity as a municipal politician, I believe I made it known to the Government of Nunavut that they had to do more to make the residents of

the Kitikmeot feel apart of Nunavut, and as an example, we had a battle over the time zones within Nunavut.

When I first got elected as MLA for the Cambridge Bay Riding, I spoke to the Premier about this issue and he assured me that he was going to work harder to allay the concerns of the residents in the Kitikmeot about not being as strong a partner in Nunavut as they were in the first few years.

I would like to ask the Premier if he could explain to me what he has done as Premier since 2004 to improve that situation and what his plans are over the next two years to really make the Kitikmeot feel apart of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I made a commitment to travel regularly to the Kitikmeot and I believe I've done that over the last few years. I don't know if we just did it once but a few times each year and I'll continue to do that to ensure that the people in the Kitikmeot feel that they are part of our territory.

We made numerous investments as a government over the years to respond to concerns by the Kitikmeot. We opened the Kugluktuk facility during this term and we have worked on concerns to address corrections over the last two terms. We recently opened a health facility in Cambridge Bay to respond to concerns on health matters in the Kitikmeot. I'm sure we can do more in not just in the Kitikmeot, but throughout Nunavut in terms of addressing concerns, but we have done what we can.

In terms of mineral activity, I have been very active in promoting development, which is a major issue in the Kitikmeot, and I will continue to do that and promoting our territory because it creates employment for our residents. I'm open to other suggestions that I hear from my colleagues on further concerns that we need to address.

My Minister of Education, Minister Picco, made a commitment to open up a trade's school although not to the same level as Rankin Inlet, but a commitment nonetheless to try and address the need for more training in the Kitikmeot for the mineral sector. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Premier for that reply.

In the Premier's opening comments he mentioned that he's had meetings with the new Prime Minister Harper and Minister of DIAND Jim Prentice. As we all know, it comes up I think every session, that 90 percent of our funding comes from the federal government through formula financing agreements. So they are a very important funding group for our operations here and we have to have good relationships with the federal government.

I would like to ask the Premier, if he could explain a little about how he, as the Premier, personally interacts with the various Prime Ministers that come and go in Ottawa and to the Ministers of DIAND to foster good relations that will benefit all Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** I believe I have a record of being able to work with who ever I have to work with, and who ever may be appointed minister of Indian Affairs at any given time. The first few years were difficult with a very difficult minister, over the years it has improved. I must say that the new minister is by far right up there with the rest in terms of being able to listen.

I am impressed with Mr. Prentice and his willingness to work with our government and other governments. He was quite up front and said "Look, I am not just going to make commitments, I want to be able to also deliver on commitments." So I look forward to working with the new Minister Prentice on our initiatives that we have to work on together. As for the Prime Minister; I have had a few meetings with him and he is very committed to being able to manage our own house in terms of devolution. That is where we have a strong rapport. That is our ultimate objective is to be able to finance our own affairs through devolution and I am very encouraged by that.

This new government is also quite open to dismantling the gun control legislation, which we have been battling since day one. I am very encouraged by my meetings with the Prime Minister and other ministers that are handling this file so I think we are making progress and unlike past governments where there were wonderful promises but nothing much was produced out of it. With this government we actually got housing money so I am encouraged.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Premier for the response. Its been reported recently over the past month and a half, two months that the new government may not live up to the obligations or commitments that were made in the Kelowna Accord.

That Accord held a lot of great promise for us up here in Nunavut. I am aware that the federal government is going to provide us with \$200 million towards housing which is great, but I think we need a lot more. We all know and it's been discussed and debated many times before in the Legislative Assembly.

I read a *Hansard* extract from the House of Commons where our Nunavut MP was criticizing the Government of Canada for not living up to that Accord. The Minister of DIAND responded that the Premier supported a Conservative budget, and the Conservative position on the Kelowna Accord. I would like to ask the Premier if he could

clarify what the Minister of DIAND was saying when he made that comment in the House of Commons. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have spoken with Mr. Prentice and have advised him that our biggest issue in Kelowna was housing and that we had made some progress on aboriginal health and that we are looking forward to be working with the new government on education. Those were the themes discussed in Kelowna.

With the announcement of \$200 million, I have told the minister that we support the federal budget as it goes along way towards meeting the needs of our housing expectations. I advised the minister and the Prime Minister that it is not enough and that we will require more help in the long run. The commitment made was for three years for the \$200 million and it is not the end.

I promised the Prime Minister that I would continue to pursue this matter, it's a good start and I support it. Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Premier, for you report. We hear a lot of discussions about how Cabinet sits around the Cabinet table and makes decisions on a regular basis. This is a consensus government not only among the ministers and the regular members but consensus amongst the Cabinet Ministers and the Premier. I would like the Premier to give me a sense or an outline of how he, as Premier, builds consensus amongst his Cabinet Members on a day-to-day basis, and then making important decisions on behalf of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think the Chair can educate you on how our session goes sometimes. Overall I am very pleased with my ministers. We have a diverse back ground and we bring those to the table and we do not always agree, that's quite common but at the end of the day we are there for the benefit for Nunavummiut and we have advanced a lot of our objectives by working together and I'm pleased with the progress that we have made so far.

As Chair of Cabinet, I try to make sure that we reach consensus as much as we can, and that at the end of the day, we have to govern and make decisions that may be difficult, but that's our job and we are here to accept that challenge and I will continue to work with all my colleagues in making sure that we can achieve as much as we can for the remainder of this term. Thank you, Mr. Chairman

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Premier. My colleague asked a question earlier about deputy ministers and the Premier replied that he is in charge of the deputy ministers. I thought that I would ask a question on that about deputy ministers for some of us in Nunavut, and not just MLAs but for a lot of people in Nunavut, there is a perception that the deputy ministers are making the decisions, rather than the ministers and MLAs.

I assure people in my riding that it's the MLAs and ministers that make the decisions and we can get into some heated debates at the constituency level as to how that works. I would like the Premier to describe to me how he can ensure that the deputy ministers are directly accountable to the minister and their department and through them to the Legislative Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Chair

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I work with my ministerial colleagues in assessing what they would expect of their deputy ministers. They have a very active role in evaluating their deputy ministers and I make sure that they are involved in assessing their deputies. I share this job with my colleagues in making sure that ministers and deputy ministers are able to work together.

At the end of the day, as Premier and Ministers, we are accountable to the House and whenever there are issues that a minister may not agree with a deputy minister, they bring it to me, and I deal with it. So I try to make sure that there is cohesion, but overall, the rapport between deputy ministers and ministers have been excellent and I look forward to more progress in seeing more Inuit at the deputy ministers' spot. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Before I recognize my colleague, I would like to remind you to have your arm or hand up for your next questions please. Before you wrongfully get charged with a false question, and we need to have some technical matters addressed and we will do that by taking a break after Peterson's questioning. So Mr. Peterson, proceed.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try to remember to put my hand up next time before my question. I thank you for your answer.

From what I am aware of, in the last couple years, the Department of EIA is responsible for hiring deputy ministers and you are responsible for EIA. The ministers themselves are not involved in hiring deputy ministers. I can understand to a certain degree how that works and why it has to be that way, but I am interested in hearing from the Premier how he would address a situation where a minister and a deputy minister are totally incompatible with each other to an extent that it is detrimental to the efficient, effective, and healthy operations of a government department. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** While I am blessed with different tools depending on the situation. I deal with it when it comes and if it comes to that, so it is a hypothetical question, I try and find ways to make it work and I have the luxury of the deputy ministers and ministers to make sure that the overall objective of the government are being met. I will continue to do that and exercise that discretion when the time comes, but, overall it is a very positive relationship. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. Any more questions Mr. Peterson? There will be none. We will take a 15-minute break to have some technical issues addressed and break for a coffee. Thank you.

*>>Meeting adjourned at 14:58 and resumed at 15:20*

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you for coming back. We have our Premier at the witness table and I would like to remind the members that all members have a total of ten questions each that they can ask the Premier while he is at the witness table. Are there any further questions to the Premier? I have no more names on my list. Mr. Alagalak.

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Premier. I am very glad that you're at the witness table. To remind the members and ask a few questions in regard to your opening comments, because it's very important to us because that all the legislations, acts, and statutes are all important to us.

Also in regard to the policy makers of the government, we need good policies to abide by in our departments but one thing that they complain about is that we are being bombarded with all sorts of statutes, rules, and procedures. We need to set everything properly, but when we hear about those kinds of things, like when they are no longer being used and nothing's done.

This is what I keep hearing that there are lots of legislation rules and they're not being used, and nothing's has been happening. It seems like there are some complaints about individuals breaking regulations and then they are disciplined more so than the ones that have broken the law, the parents are going through difficult times and the elders are now going through difficult times because these elders can't sleep at night even though there are rules and they're now asking to please try and make sure that these drugs are being used in our communities in Nunavut, even though they are legislated; they are federally legislated; they're not regulated; therefore they're not therapeutic.

I was wondering as the Premier of Nunavut that if you have considered these issues. I am sure that are concerned about it but I would like to get your personal viewpoint on that as our Premier.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is not new. As my colleague started talking about this in the past; although we had responded a bit, but we can respond to that concern, and we did respond to that concern with a drug dog. I know that all over Canada we are facing these situations. Due to the fact that we are quite far from these detrimental issues that we've stayed away from the very strong drugs, but some of the strong drugs have come into our communities and we will have to monitor these very carefully.

Not just Nunavummiut are experiencing these difficulties; it's all across Canadian provinces and we will deal with this as long as we need to because these drugs have come to our communities and we will have to alleviate that problem not just through these sessions, but with the support of the RCMP and the communities.

We will have to work together to alleviate these problems and when you find out these kinds of problems, you call the RCMP and as a government alone we cannot work on these problems, we need to have the support of all. Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Premier. Mr. Alagalak.

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Premier Paul, and thank you for that statement, but that's how it is in regard to the drugs that are federally legislated and we need to deal with these further.

I think it was last year or the year before that I had asked a question and we wanted to get that RCMP dog, even though that RCMP dog was quite expensive, but we got that dog and we heard that dog was going to help to alleviate the import of drugs and illegal alcohol.

We heard about that dog was going to visit communities, but that is not the case. This has not occurred and even though our community expect that dog to come in it does not go to the communities, but that dog is more geared toward the schools to the students instead of doing the actual work. So I was wondering as the Premier, have you considered this any further. Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, as I indicated previously that dog had stopped approximately \$2 million worth of value of drugs and this dog has been very beneficial. I just want to point that out to you.

That dog does not just go to the schools even though the dog's work is not very visible, but the benefits are there and it has alleviated the drugs from community to community, but that dog will not stop all the drugs coming in to our communities.

We will have to work together to alleviate this problem. Thank you.



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

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My next question is that since you are committed to these, and that we need a dog for the RCMP, with your help, we were able to see that become reality.

But we have heard from our constituency that we have to work harder so that our younger generation will become less dependent on these drugs. If nothing is done, the problems will get even bigger and increasing numbers of youth will get into drugs. Even though it is very expensive, I am sure it would save a lot more money that could have been lost by the users. I was told that the regions would have to get their own drug dogs.

As to the benefits, they say that these dogs will become the only way to address the issue. Have you had any further thoughts on this? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you. We are representing Nunavut as a whole to alleviate these kinds of problems. Looking at the fiscal year 2005, RCMP was able to stop \$953, 000 worth of drugs from coming into our community.

Yes, I know that we could not stop all of them from coming into our communities, but we will continue to alleviate the selling of drugs in our communities. Looking at this, this is quite a huge sum, so they are very busy on a daily basis all over Nunavut. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the Premier, but you still have not responded to my question because since you work for Nunavut as a whole and we've got that RCMP drug dog, but my question was: have you ever considered working more rigorously on that?

I believe that there should be more than one dog since there are three regions in Nunavut. Perhaps get two dogs since Baffin is a huge region, perhaps provide drug dogs for each region.

What we have heard is that with one drug dog, we are not alleviating the problem enough. I was wondering if you have considered another dog to be put into Nunavut. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. That elaborates the question. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we look for all ways of how to look at this and how we can deal with this. We are open to all options of how we can deal with this on the issue of prevention.

I'm sure we will have to work on this issue on the preventative side. So if we can work on the preventative side we can alleviate the drug problems. I'm not looking at regions. I want you to know that I am focusing on Nunavut as a whole.

I'm not focusing myself on the three regions. I'm focusing on Nunavut as a whole. So we will look into how we can address this problem. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Mr. Alagalak.

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that's how it is. I know.

But moving on with another question, the public thinks that regular members are part of the government but we're not part of the government. Though we are regular members, the public out there blames us telling us that the government is not functioning well.

They mainly talk about the government employee policies, on the days of work and the number of holidays. It seems like our staff cannot be maintained permanently and it seems like there are a lot more people not working out there.

When it's bingo day, or Nevada day, or when there is a sale at the store, then the staff no longer work in their office. While these things occur, well, first of all, I should ask you, have you heard about these kinds of complaints? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Although I know that we try to follow the holiday statutes like Hamlet Days and we try to support the communities with those statutory holidays. I have not heard anything about this outside the statutory holidays. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that I'm doing this on purpose. I do want our government to be liked by the public. The public that has voted us into the Legislative Assembly would like for us to go to work on time and not be tardy and at five o'clock we stop working.

Even though that's the case, they complain about the fact that some staff don't even come into work even though it's a work day. At times, they think they that there is no policy to abide by, so I believe that our government should start considering the fact that the public out there seems disdained with the government.

We are just regular members and the public out there blame us saying that we are the government; even though you said that you did not hear about that and I am sure that the government does not know about this. Can the government look into this to make sure that the civil servants are looking after this properly? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Minister of Human Resources is here and I am sure he had heard. I will discuss this matter and look into that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Alagalak. Mr. Kattuk.

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with the member completely with regards to the police dog. There is somehow unemployment at the community level and usually the people who are working usually go to work at 9:00 in the morning.

It is just a comment but I think that everybody should be able to go work at the hours that they are supposed to. In the regular members' statements, I stated that the government legislation or rules in procedures are too foreign to the people of Nunavut, and I think it is very important for this government to make sure that *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* or societal values are implemented into the government.

We were created as a government to make sure to have, from the government, and again Inuit societal values are not being practiced by the head officials or the Department of Health and they are not being practiced by the government. I would like to ask the Premier what he intends to do about implementing Inuit societal values within the government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know that we have to do more and in regard to the question, we do know that we have to put more Inuktitut content in the Health Department.

I am very pleased that we are starting to see more Inuit nurses graduating, there is also traditional midwifery that is being reintroduced again to our society, we have to make sure that we take those back and start practicing them again, but again we have to do much more obviously because of course it is very important and it is stated a lot.

Possibly what we can do is build a model and to make sure that whatever we are doing is heard by the people of Nunavut. So what we can do is set up a model and find out exactly what next steps we have to do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Kattuk.

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Mr. Premier. The *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* is there already and I do not think that we have to create a new model.

My next question is in regard to Department of Social Services and it's regarding counsellors. If there is a case of spousal assault, the woman and the children are sent out of the community which is detrimental to the relationship of the couple. Inuit say that there is a possibility of reconciliation between the couple and their children if they are not sent out of their communities. I think that the Inuit using traditional methods should take on that sort of counselling. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Possibly, I wasn't listening but I heard two questions. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Yes, I think that is, but it was set to one question, you will have to ask one question at a time because they are counted.

In regard to the couples and their children, it's usually done by the order of the courts. It's something that I don't do personally, but we are looking at how we can improve the system and implement more Inuit societal values as a foundation. We have tried this in Rankin Inlet and it's something that the people are very pleased to see being practiced.

We are also looking at how the courts and the general public can work better together. We have also seen what the Yukon Government has done in regard to counselling and healing specifically in this area. We are looking at how we can improve our services in this area and will continue to look for ways to improve.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wasn't talking about aggravated assault; I was focusing more on non-violence, but I will go on to my question and it's something that I mentioned in the general comments.

In the non-decentralized communities, what do you, as the Premier, going to be developing for the non-decentralized communities? What plans do you have so that there is more support in the smaller communities? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's in the plans. We have set aside five million dollars that will be used for further development.

In the next week, Mr. Akasuk is going to be tabling the contents of what we're going to be doing with the non-decentralized communities. There is \$5 million that will be set aside and we do know that further support is required by the smaller communities. We will be tabling that next week. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Premier. Mr. Kattuk.

**Mr. Kattuk:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not want to focus on the communities I am representing, but it is necessary and I want to ask questions. Sanikiluaq is a forgotten community of Nunavut and it was not mentioned in your opening speech.

I know our community of Sanikiluaq is a forgotten community and we would like to be full participants. We do not get very many visits from government officials and of course there is a very high cost of living there. As a forgotten community, what are you going to do to make sure Sanikiluaq participates?

What are your plans for the future of Sanikiluaq? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was my question.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): I agree completely with the member. Of course there are some communities on the fringes of Nunavut that are concerned about their participation in this territory. We felt the same way when we were part of the North West Territories and Yellowknife was the capital.

I usually try to make it to Sanikiluaq twice a year. It is one of the most beautiful communities in our territory. Of course, we like to help the smaller communities in Nunavut and I will be urging the members of the Executive to make sure they include Sanikiluaq during their visits. We have to focus more on the communities that are on the outskirts of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Premier. That was his last question. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Premier I would like to thank you for taking the time today to be at this table. I am sure some of the communities are listening to the proceedings here, but I would like to ask my first question. I have heard that Nunavut is a new territory, but the Inuit have been in this region for thousands and thousands of years. We were the only inhabitants here; we did not have to take it forcibly from another people.

We have been here for thousands of years and I get a little bit bewildered on how Nunavut can be a new territory. With that comment in mind, I would like to ask you, Mr. Premier, because the Nunavut government has a few weak spots, and it seems to be even weaker than the municipal governments when we are looking at the mandates.

The community elects the mayors and if we look at these organizations, there are quite a number of them with elected officials. They are elected by the people who are 16 and older, and who are eligible to vote. I am talking about the Inuit organizations. I think one of the weaknesses of this Nunavut Government is when will we start electing the Premier Nunavut-wide. At the same time I don't even see the member as the Premier because he is selected by the House here. I see him as the Premier when he is voted by the people of Nunavut, but I won't focus on that.

One thing that I find very important is that the people of Nunavut can give strength to the government. Possibly, what we can do is set up a commission that will do a review and decide in how many years from now that the Premier will be elected Nunavut-wide. Would the Premier support this idea? Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wouldn't be here if I wasn't supported by the people of Nunavut. I would like to be clear on that. It wasn't me who put me in this position. We are representing all the people of Nunavut and that's why we are sitting here. You're the people that put me in this position. If you would like to make a change I would be more than supportive of the idea because it's a rule. We will have to get support from you in order to make that change. I am more than open to any suggestions and if you would like to make any changes to the legislation, I am here.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): It would be good if all the members support this because it would give more strength to our government, and they would be more accountable. If the public was able to vote for the Premier it would be more ideal. They would be able to say that they prefer that system. Instead of the Premier just saying that he's just waiting then he can as the Premier would have the authority to set up a commission.

Maybe the Cabinet doesn't want to give this consideration even if it's not politics or if the election of the Members of the Legislative Assembly, the Premier could also be elected. Has this been considered?

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you. Yes, we have not dealt with this. We represent Nunavummiut and if you feel that there should be more improvements with that, I will be in support of whatever the wishes of the members.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): There are a lot of concerns but it would give you more strength to negotiate with Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office, because a lot of time people are kind of hesitant to go into party politics and that we didn't know it was the Communist Party. I think that even the chairman is elected now.

I think we should give this consideration because in the communities the mayors are elected; they're not just put there by the hamlet council; they are elected by the public. I just wanted to mention that.

As Members of the Legislative Assembly we have to think that in the future if we are to operate like a real government, maybe in the near future we shall have to elect our own Premier. That's what I wanted to say.

So my question is in regard to the courts and there was a communiqué or correspondence that indicates a heavy load and a large backlog in the courts. In some cases, it takes them a year or more where the accused are not to go back to their communities and so can you update and confirm with us if this has been dealt with and if indeed the people who are waiting for trial or who have been summoned to court are waiting for a year or more. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): thank you Mr. Chairman, this is nothing new and I don't think that it will go away soon.

We have to deal with it as it is under the federal legislation and we have tried to assess the situation and I am very thankful to my colleagues that the Ministers and the Cabinet approved to increase the number of court circuits to the communities. This will put a slight dent into the backlog and I'm sure we will have to work on this further especially with the violence which is one of the reasons people are summoned to court. I have asked our Senior Advisor, as to how we can use more of our Inuit values and use it in the court system, as this will help in the future. Thank you Mr. Chairman

**Chairman:** Mr. Curley

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, yes I would like to thank the minister, I'm pretty sure that there is a lot of interest out there for the answer as offenders keep going back and forth and there are a lot of people who are willing to help if they are asked.

Normally, people don't volunteer if they are not asked. I will be bringing out more questions to the ministers but as the Minister of Justice, what I would like you to do is to look at how we can make improvements. You stated that some cases take a long time where a person has to appear before a Judge and sometimes they have to appear before a JP a Justice of the Peace and the RCMP.

These people are sent out of the community and there are a large people who are not permitted to go back into their communities. If there is violence involved against a spouse, then it is alright that they are not allowed to see their spouse. There are some men who are not permitted to see their children because they are not allowed back into their community. I wonder if you can advise or give direction to the RCMP or JP that those men should have visiting rights, especially if it is an order from the judicial system. Thank you.

**Chairman:** I would like to remind members if you say thank you, to please say it at the end so that the operators know which microphone on appropriately. Thank you. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we are very aware of this and we are definitely trying to do something because this has been an issue in every community and we are currently trying to deal with how we can expedite the process.

I know we have to abide by the rules, but I'm pretty sure we can go around the legislation if we include the Inuit society values and traditions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Yes, I have another question. Our government provides licenses for lotteries, does the government have any idea because a lot of families are wasting money on gambling.

We even hear that they even gamble in the boarding homes. Apparently they're gambling big time in those boarding homes. I wonder if you can impose restrictions on issuing, or welfare recipients, if they buy something, or sometimes if there is going to be a bingo, they sell gas that they had purchased.

I wonder how this can be controlled. I think only the Government of Nunavut has the authority to do that. I'm pretty sure that there are gambling addictions. I wonder if you can search for people to come and counsel these people and if you have thought about this. If not, can you revitalize this? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is an issue, especially with the consumers down south, they have big gambling problems. Luckily we don't have a casino here, so that has been a benefit. On the issuance of licenses; we have given that to the hamlet councils. If a hamlet council doesn't want to deal with licensing, we have to administer it ourselves. We may have to review this issue at some point. In the southern provinces where they make applicants set aside a portion of the revenues to deal with gambling addictions and it is something we can review and see if we can come up with a solution. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Another question; as we all know that in Nunavut, the prices, the cost of everything is going up and the income support is not very much. The power bills are going up, fuel prices, so, looking at these increases, and we don't have much control over the food that comes in. I wonder if the Premier can...because some communities are not using Churchill, I wonder if the government can look into this



further because I heard that this was delayed by the federal government and the residents of Nunavut would definitely want to hear about this. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, this is an ongoing issue and we are constantly trying to make improvements. The government is new and I have talked to them about this, and when they visit the north, I will take them to the different stores so they can see the process for themselves. I am sure we will have to bring this up again with the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to take part in this Nunavut Leadership Forum and also would like to welcome the Premier to the witness table and your responses are coming across very clear as regular members over here on this side are very good sometimes on this side, but the Cabinet Members seem like they still have not gotten there sometimes. Perhaps, they have been stuck in the offices.

So my questions have been posed already by my colleagues. Mr. Kattuk had asked a question that I wanted to ask. I will supplement his question, but ever since you were elected what kind of support did you provide to the smaller communities to date. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, we have set aside \$5 million and I am sure that by next week we will be able to provide detailed information and I am sure that you are impatiently waiting for it. I would like to read to it for this support benefit program, but I know we will have look for ways on how to improve this. Thank you.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do not have much comments or questions today, but I do have a very short question.

Since the government is representing Nunavut as a whole some communities tend to get more infrastructure, whether it would be funding or infrastructure, than the other communities. The assistance or support awarded to the communities varies from community to community.

In your comments, I noted that the rest of Premier's conference you mentioned in your opening comments will be here in Iqaluit within the year or more. I know that the first

Premier's conference is very important. As one of the few who can consider or think about if you can hold that meeting outside of Iqaluit.

It is evident that the two larger communities can probably hold the rest of Premier's councils. When we talk about decentralization, it means that we need to get those communities an opportunity too to get the benefits. I was wondering if the Premier can reconsider this. Thank you.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with my colleague. If we were able to hold it outside of Iqaluit we would have done so, but the Western Premiers' Conference, during that meeting they selected Iqaluit, which was totally out of our control. They have to make themselves available and the media has to follow the Western Premiers' Conference because the Western Premiers' Conference tries to be visible across Canada. We need room for the media crew, if they are going to hold that meeting in Nunavut Iqaluit was the only community that we can use.

I acknowledge my colleague's views. I'm sure that we'll be traveling outside of Iqaluit to show them around and to orientate them a bit more about our life here. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Mapsalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My last question, although I had asked this question to you more than once as the Minister for the Department of Justice, the initiatives that you started, like for example, the healing centres for indictable offences, I had asked this question in the past previously. They can be used as an initiative in the smaller communities.

Perhaps, as a government, you can consider this matter of the communities to establish that kind of thing in the smaller communities. I believe you stated by saying that there's not enough RCMP officers in the communities and that could pose some dangers. I'm sure that RCMP officers can increase in the communities.

I was wondering if you can consider the smaller communities to come up with that kind of initiative so that they could have opportunity for work and employment over there.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The RCMP officer has a difficult time with the funding that we have. So, therefore, I cannot really respond to you as to how it's going to be because we have to review the funding for operating work. That's one of our stumbling barriers. We don't want to have any of the communities to be put into dangerous issues but we had set up outpost camps in Nunavut to deal with this issue and they have been very beneficial.

I will be open to this kind of program, or project, so therefore, I cannot really respond to your question at this time. Thank you.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Mapsalak said that was going to be his last question. Since that was his last question, I don't have any further questions to the Premier. I have no more members on my list. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm sorry about that. I wanted to speak to and I had a question if nobody else is willing to ask one. I wanted to ask the Premier about the Nunavut Association of Municipalities. As we all know NAM represents all incorporated communities in Nunavut and members are all the mayors in Nunavut.

My colleague from Rankin Inlet mentioned that mayors are elected at the community level, so they are quite important and they represent all Nunavummiut, all 31,000 of us, and that a group like NAM is an important lobbying organization.

My question for the Premier: could he explain to me what the position is of the government on the status of involving NAM and mayors more fully in meetings or discussions at the federal level that would help to benefit the lives of Nunavummiut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To date, we have been focused on government-to-government relations with the federal government, and depending on any given issue, we consult with NAM and we will continue to do so. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Premier. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Mr. Premier. Just to follow up to the question, NAM recently held their AGM in Cambridge Bay and in the course of their discussions, they passed a resolution that they wanted to be more fully involved or consulted on the devolution process, and I believe that they already have directed to the government or will forward that resolution to the government.

My question for the Premier: is the Premier willing to entertain keeping the Nunavut Association of Municipalities involved or have them participate in discussions that will help them achieve their objectives with respect to that resolution? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. (interpretation) Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My focus will be to get an agreement with Ottawa and that will be my sole focus. The more parties there are at the table, the longer

it's going to be. So I'm not open to having them as a party, NTI will be a party in those discussions, but I'm more than willing to have consultations, updates with the mayors.

But like I said, negotiations are not only in camera for the purposes of trying to get an agreement, and the more open, it may be more difficult. We would have to talk with the federal government and NTI to see what type of process they would like to have in our negotiations, but before they happen, I'm not willing to commit to anything. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the Premier for that information. My next question concerns children and youth.

Mr. Chairman, as we all know and we have spoken about it many times, children and youth make up more than 50 percent of our Nunavut population. Many are living in conditions that might be considered third world conditions elsewhere in the world; many are living in poverty, many are being abused, many are apprehended by the government, many are homeless, this ultimately leads to a difficult life for them as they move through their young years and become adults.

I don't know if we track them as they move into adulthood, but we always talk at the community level, it takes an entire community to raise a child, and I think in Nunavut that that's never more evident. It takes an entire community; it takes an entire territory to raise a child.

In the past, not only in this term but in the first term when I was a mayor and with the Nunavut Association of Municipalities, I have spoken about the need for a child advocate to be a voice for children and youth, and it would help youth, families and children and communities deal with the day-to-day issues affecting children and help them stay together. Nunavut is one of the few jurisdictions in all of Canada that doesn't have a child advocate. I have mentioned this many times as MLA.

My question for the Premier: can the Premier tell me what his personal position is on establishing a child advocate for Nunavut irrespective of what we have discussed here in the Legislative Assembly? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. (interpretation) Mr. Premier.

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm here in my capacity as Premier and head of the government. I've stated before, I look forward to a motion in the House and debating this matter with all members, and I'll wait for those results. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Premier. Mr. Peterson, your tenth and final question. Please proceed.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't think the Premier answered that last question but I'm going to move onto my last question here.

It concerns the recent Auditor General's Report, which was very critical of the Government of Nunavut's finances. I think she said we're at level one out of a scale of five in terms of being capable of managing our Nunavut finances. This was after six years.

Now we're facing a shortage of qualified financial people, accountants, and many other issues. It has a lot to do with people not being trained or educated, inadequate housing to hire people, inadequate pay.

My question for the Premier is: can he tell me what the view is of the Prime Minister, and/or the Federal Government of Canada with respect to our relative inability to manage our government finances? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Paul Okalik:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I must say that I take exception over not being able to manage our finances. I haven't seen any sponsorship scandal. I haven't seen massive theft of finances in our government. So that's where I would draw the line.

It's a matter of perhaps counting all the beans. So that's what we're responding to. I've assured the Prime Minister that we are looking at this very seriously and that we are putting together a comprehensive response so that we can reassure the federal government and the people of Nunavut that we will do our part in making sure that the precious dollars that we have are very carefully monitored. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Premier. I would remind the members that I have no more names on my list. Thank you. I have no other names on my list and I would like to take this time to thank you Mr. Premier. You may leave the witness table. Thank you.

Members, I will remind you of what we will be doing at this time. We set up the proceedings this morning and we identified who was going to be making their appearances. I would now like to ask Minister Brown to proceed to the witness table. Madame Minister, you have up to 10 minutes to deliver your statement. Please proceed. Thank you.

Thank you, Ms. Brown. I would like to thank you for making an appearance. As I stated earlier, you have 10 minutes to make your opening remarks.

### **Opening Remarks by Minister Brown**

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity and I would like to welcome you to Iqaluit and for the safe trip that you had, it is something that we have to be thankful for.

I felt very much this morning that we do have one member missing. I'm sure that it is something that is not going to be easily forgotten.

I'm very pleased to be able to make an appearance in front of the members. I would like to give you a brief overview of what I have been doing and what kinds of impacts it has had in the Department of Community and Government Services.

The government approved the mandate and the huge responsibility. It identifies how it's going to be used in the territory of Nunavut; *Inuuqatigiittiarniq* is included, and it shows you what is going to be made available to the communities. That is one most important issue by the Nunavut Government.

We have to work together as a government with the communities. For the past few months I have been going to the communities. I visited 15 communities and had meetings with the mayors within these communities and also with the other entities at the community level.

I met the mayors of Nunavut in Cambridge Bay at the NAM meeting and also had a meeting with community members. I also did that in Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit. I made a commitment to make sure that I meet with the mayors and the people at the community level on a personal basis. We also heard some of the priorities that were identified by the communities.

The infrastructure has to be improved in the majority of the communities; like the roads, for example. It seems also, and I am very sad to say, that there has been an increase in the number of suicides and spousal assaults. Again there is also an increase in the use of alcohol and drugs.

One thing that is very important is the issue of languages. As an Inuk, I would like to preserve my mother tongue. It is very important. We also see the elders who are sad to see the young people not being able to speak Inuktitut anymore. There seems to be a growing number. We have very limited interpreter/translators, and at times, its hard hold proceedings because of the lack of an interpreter.

If we don't deal with these issues now it's going to get more precarious as the years go. I think it's very important that we start dealing with it right away.

(interpretation ends) It is too easy to draw on the negative on the problems caused by lack of human or financial resources. We have much to celebrate in the creation of a new territory. In seven short years we have accomplished many things and made progress in both building our government structures and starting to define an Inuit way of doing things in government.

We have developed new programs and policies and defined our vision. We are learning from our relations with other jurisdictions and from our participation in our many important meeting with Inuit organizations and the federal government, and with those in all geographic regions.

I also must acknowledge what I have learned from those that we've met, including the most importantly, the valuable insights from my colleagues in this legislature. Even so, there are those who are frustrated by it, they see a too slow progress. The expectations were high in 1999 and perhaps around they underestimated the work that would be required to realize our dreams.

As Inuit we look upon these challenges as opportunities for growth and improvement. We knew about partnerships and sharing knowledge as traditional keys to survival. One of the most significant partnerships that have been formed with the municipalities was with the Nunavut Infrastructure Advisory Committee. The process was begun by my predecessor in the department.

I believe it is essential that communities have a meaningful role in the decision making. The role of the new Community Infrastructure Advisory Committee is of such importance to Government of Nunavut that we formally included it both our draft tax agreement with the federal government. The model represented by the Nunavut Community Infrastructure Advisory Committee provides extra partnership, templates for addressing other issues that will impact economic and safety health of communities.

Building on this model, we can work together more effectively to deal with energy use and conservation challenges and better address environmental issues to ensure wise use of our resources. We can develop a common perspective on social issues that impact our municipalities and jointly address the human resource training issues we will confront.

We can also draw on the experience that we develop key policies and undertake training that allow us to address emergency management, search and rescue and fire safety issues in each of our communities.

What we have created with the Community Infrastructure Advisory Committee, like many things we develop is unique. No other jurisdiction is approaching community involvement in the same way. Inuit life experiences based on partnerships and trust are the driving force in sustaining our way of life. We are building on our tradition of consensus, respect for elders, and construct as we build the Nunavut future.

I thank you for the opportunity to share my vision about the work we are doing to build sustainable communities. I hope these comments have been useful and I look forward to addressing your questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. I apologize. I would like to remind the members that the members may make a statement not exceeding three minutes in response to the

minister. I have no names on my list I would like to ask the regular members if they would like to take this opportunity to make a statement to the minister's comments; nobody? Mr. Alagalak.

### **Members' Replies to Minister Brown's Remarks**

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to get a copy of the statement that was made by the minister if at all possible, and just to make a general comment.

When you took on this portfolio you took on a huge responsibility and I think it is one of the biggest when you look at all the departments because of course at the community level there is infrastructure that is required, there is the municipal governments and others that are under your department. I think that it is required for your department to have as much support and services as you can.

If you look at the church, or the Hunters and Trappers Association, or the powerhouse, or the school, it all goes to a department. We are grateful for the department to be providing these types services and the support. When the Premier was at the witness table, I stated that there is more support required at the community level. There is so much needed, roads are needed; there are water lakes and lagoons that are required at the community level.

What communities need are advisors that would be made available to them so that communities can make their long-term plans.

I think that your department is the most important and is constantly required. In my point of view, there are the other departments but not always in the forefront such as your department, a department that has to be on the go constantly and ready for anything.

I will be asking more questions later on. Thank you, Mr. Chairman

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, I don't know if there is any copies of the speech that she did, but it is at the discretion of the minister if they would provide copies or not, Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. I would like to thank the minister for the very positive presentation. I have been around municipal affairs for many years and I have served on the Hamlet Council of Cambridge Bay for several years since 1984 prior being elected as MLA. I have a lot of dealings with government of Northwest Territories and the Government of Nunavut, MACA, Community Government and Services and different incarnations.

From 2000 to 2003 I was involved with NAM and I have to say that it was a very difficult period of time. We hold a NAM, Nunavut Association of Municipalities AGM



every year and we had anywhere between 30 and 40 resolutions that came from the communities and were forwarded to the territorial government or the federal government.

I was at the NAM AGM in Cambridge Bay last month. The mayors still have a lot of concerns, but there is a lot of good interaction between the mayors and the federal and territorial employees over there and it was very heartening to see the minister and her staff over there to address the issues and concerns.

I think it was very positive to note that on an annual basis that there are now usually less than a dozen resolutions to come out of an AGM. That indicates that the Department of Community and Government Services is getting out more into the communities meeting with mayors, meeting with council and being more responsive to the municipal leaders and to the Nunavut Municipality Organization.

I truly believe that people are less critical and more positive about things if people talk with them or respond to their concerns. I see a lot more going on in the last few years and I would like to credit yourself and your predecessors for a lot of work. I think you are going in the right direction. I know there are some very daunting challenges.

Enormous sums of money are required to deal with all the issues that the mayor's are seeking help with. I truly hope that the minister and her officials will be able to get that and accomplish good things in the years ahead. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. I do not have anybody else on my list for regular members' statements. Are there any other regular members?

I would like to remind everyone that all regular members have a total 20 questions that they can ask at the remaining members of cabinet as a whole. Please note, a regular member may choose to ask all of his to one minister, or divide his questions between a number of ministers.

Regular members are not required to ask all of their questions consecutively. So it is up to the discretion of the regular member. Are there any questions to the Minister before you? Mr. Curley.

### **Questions to Minister Brown**

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am still having difficulty with the number one terminal. Thank you, Minister for appearing before us and welcome to the meeting.

I want to make it very clear and I am fully aware of the NNI Policy that is under the Department of Economic Development. The policy itself is implemented through the Department of Community and Government Services.

The reason for this policy is to improve and increase the number of Inuit working when it comes to the contracts. There are some that say that the NNI Policy makes the cost of contracts go up. I personally don't agree with this comment, I think southern contractors just don't want to hire Inuit workers.

I want to ask the minister if she has heard anything about this problem and if she has any recommendations to the Department of Economic Development. This will help ensure that contractors abide by the NNI policy .

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Ms. Brown.

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First of all, you were to be issued a copy of the statement that I made and I will give copies to the members.

In regard to NNI Policy, and as the Minister of Community and Government Services, I have not heard any complaints relating to this issue. Contractors abide by the policy rules and I agree that it is a very beneficial policy for Inuit in Nunavut. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Brown. The member said he had a number of questions. To his second question, go ahead.

**Mr. Curley** (interpretation): Thank you. There are 18 left. I'm pretty sure a lot of us can't keep track.

Minister Brown, last year there was bad gas and the hunters were going through a lot of difficulty and could not travel a long distance away. The caribou was far away from the community and up until now they would have to go through a long process and many have not yet been compensated due to such a complicated process many do not even apply for compensation. I wonder if Community and Government Services have dropped this issue. Thank you.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Curley. Ms. Brown.

**Hon. Levinia Brown:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. What my colleague asked is that there were two sets of assistance, first; for spark plugs, which went through fine, and the other being for spark plugs.

We were doing work for Shell Canada and Shell Canada had brought their own mechanics and experts. We were merely advising the people in Nunavut and I believe that I tabled this in the House because I believe that I had tabled the document. I also understand how he feels because I'm from Nunavut, as well, and want to work will Nunavummiut on this issue.

Legislation and policies dictate how we handle issues like this one and I don't always like all the red tape associated with these policies as well. What I heard and tabled here at the

House is that the experts and the mechanics from Shell Canada said that all claims had been dealt with, that is what I heard from them. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Madame Minister. I don't have anybody else on my list for member's statements to the minister. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for answering my colleague's questions.

Can the minister give us an overview or describe her type of leadership style within the government, within her department and her relationship with her staff? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Ms. Brown.

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to thank the member for his question.

I have been a leader in a number of things, and as the Minister of Community and Government Services, I communicate with my staff, and I am not hesitant to tell them or direct them in which way I want them to go, but what I want to do is work closely with my staff and that they are open with me, and in turn, I'll be open with them and to be transparent.

I also want my staff to trust me and I also want to trust them so that everything will be transparent, so that I will have a better leadership that way because when you're a leader, it's very important and you want your staff to go with your request, and if I'm doing something wrong, then I expect to be told. But up to date, my staff is doing a very good job and they are continuing with the task that I assigned them.

Even though we know that we won't be happy all the time because unexpected things arise even when we least expect it and we have all gone through that. We can never satisfy or make all Nunavummiut happy all the time. We will stumble through difficult times, some days it's easy times. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

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

The relationship between the Government of Nunavut and the federal government is very important as we know. I mentioned in my comments to the Premier that 90 percent of our funding comes from the federal government and the government comes out with various national programs over the years which sometimes benefit us and sometimes they don't, depending on how much funding you can get out of your negotiation discussions.

Can you describe one or two specific things that you have accomplished in your relationship with the federal government over your term as the Minister of Health and now as your role as the Minister of Community and Government Services? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Levinia Brown** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You are asking a question in regard to the portfolio I had with the Department of Health and Social Services; I met with my counterparts down in the provinces, I have worked very closely with them, and we have dealt with many issues within the department. I was able to elaborate to them that we were always in shortage of funding for the Department of Health. I would tell them annually that we are always in shortage of funds for the Department of Health and Social Services.

At that time, we provided more funding for dentists or removal of teeth, and I don't know why there was backlog for dental work, but we are following the correspondence provided by the federal government and that's how we were able to pay for the accruals that weren't paid and there was a huge backlog of dental therapy required for the people.

So they were caught up, as I stated as the minister, and at that time, they found out that there was a huge backlog and once everything has been completed, then they fund the government that pay for them.

With the Department of Community and Government Services, when I started holding that portfolio, it was easier, but with the Department of Health and Social Services, the problem I encountered was that we were always in shortage of funding. With the Department of Community and Government Services, with this portfolio I now hold for CGS, we met our counterparts down south in the provinces. I had signed Gas Tax Agreement in August and this, I know, will benefit all the communities. Secondly, just recently we signed a \$20 million agreement for Economic Development and Transportation, and also, the \$20 million after it was approved, Nunavut is going to benefit from that.

So every time we meet with our counterparts down south, they spark up when I tell them the population of Nunavut, which is approximately 30,000 across 25 communities, and each of the 25 communities will require infrastructure such as schools, and health centres. But, when we count the schools today, there are 42 schools and each community of the 25 communities need airstrips. Each community of the 25 communities needs recreation committees. Everything has to be 25.

My counterparts in the provinces find it very difficult to believe that we are separated because if there were a population of 30,000 down south, then they would live in one area with one airport, with one program, and services all in one, and one huge hospital.

But in Nunavut, it's totally different. Everything is segregated within our communities. Each community is quite far from one another. I hope I answered your question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Ms. Brown. Are you finished? I have no more names on my list. Are there any questions to the minister? I have no more members on my list. Thank you. Minister Brown, thank you. You may leave the witness table.

The next minister on my list is Minister Picco. Minister Brown, you may leave the witness table. Thank you, Minister Brown. I would like to ask Minister Picco if he can go to the witness table to read his opening statements if he's not going to take too long. Thank you.

Thank you, Minister Picco. Do you have any opening comments? You will have 10 minutes to do your statement. Thank you.

### **Opening Remarks by Minister Picco**

**Hon. Ed. Picco** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will speak in Inuktitut. First of all, I would like to welcome each and every one of you. We all know that we have lost our Speaker.

(interpretation ends) I think we have 10 minutes. As a Member of the Cabinet I will talk about that issue: 21 communities. Thank you, and also to Tootoo, who is very handsome.

First of all, very quickly, I'd like to thank the members. As I said earlier, I will try to be quick in my comments to the members today. I would like to begin by giving an overview of some of the portfolios that I have, and when I was asked to sit on Cabinet, and selected to be on Cabinet, the Premier gave me a list of portfolios and I would like to try to run through them very quickly.

Under my mandate as Minister responsible for Homelessness, Immigration, and Energy, as members know, the Government of Nunavut is the only jurisdiction other than our federal government to have a department responsible for the issue of homelessness. The past two years have seen the secretariat move forward with opening the new homeless shelter, as well as looking at other activities within Nunavut.

An example of this is opening up the new shelters, I just said, helping fund a study by the Nunavut Status of Women Council on homelessness and women in Nunavut, working with Cape Dorset group on an excellent study that they completed on homelessness in the community, working with *Qimaavik* to try to identify the possible beds and transition beds for homeless women here in Iqaluit.

The Homeless Secretariat has a budget of a little over \$100,000, there are no staff members. Support to me the minister is provided to the deputy minister Hine, as well as through my minister's office.

As Minister responsible for Immigration, we have been busy working with our federal government and our MP on issues of passports and immigration issues. Again there are no assigned staff for this portfolio and support is derived from our ADM and our Ottawa Office and through my minister's office. We have been working on a provincial nomination program for immigrants and we will be meeting with the federal minister responsible in the coming weeks.

As Minister responsible for Education, the department has had numerous accomplishments over the past couple of years, Mr. Chairman. In order to narrow these down to the top three or four, I have used the *Pinasuaqtavut* document for guidance.

First, implementing the fundamental shift that you heard me talk about, the fundamental shift in education and delivery of education here in Nunavut, changes to a school funding formula has resulted in over 100 new positions in our schools and classrooms across Nunavut, as well as new funding to our DEAs.

Cabinet has approved the bilingual education strategy that will see the development of a K-12 curriculum and Inuktitut teaching resources, community consultations on languages of instruction, as well as the implementation of a PTR, Mr. Chairman, is something that we are proud of, a PTR of 20:1 across Nunavut, and the revitalization of our Nunavut Teacher Education Program.

Mr. Berger's conciliation report suggests on page 31 of his report I believe, that the department's implementation of these strategies that I have just outlined and a fundamental shift in education since 2004 is moving the department, and the Department of Education in the right direction that they meet the requirements of Berger's report and gives us a credible version of the bilingual strategy that he has outlined.

Working with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, we have been creating the *Education Act*. We have had more consultation, more visits, and more input on that Act than any other Act in any other Act introduced to date, or will be introduced to date in Nunavut. All the community consultations have been completed and now the actual work of drafting the new Act has begun.

We have introduced a new Young Parents Stay in School Program. This is to help many of our young people who become pregnant while in school, this is an area that we need to address; this program helps subsidize the day-care program for these young mothers.

Looking at the future in skills and employment opportunities for Nunavummiut, we have announced the new trades school and the financial commitment from the Northern Strategy. We have established for the first time, Mr. Chairman, a Skills Canada-Nunavut Competition that allows students the opportunity to experience Trades Skills Competitions while they are in school. Team Nunavut just recently returned from Nova Scotia where one of our participants received a bronze medal.

We have an aggressive capital plan in the department that will see for the first time ever every new school constructed in Nunavut, as well as every new large renovation program will have a dedicated daycare space included.

We have established proactive partnerships with the federal and regional Inuit organizations to advance educational training and programs and services. An example of this is our Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy, which was developed under an agreement between the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

In consultation with over 30 departments and agencies, the Federal Government Department of Education created the first Nunavut Community Skills Inventory System that has the potential to develop a full labour market analysis system in place for Nunavut residents. That will give us an opportunity to be able to compete on a national level when we are looking at career opportunities, as well as possible vocational and academic training. We've also successfully established the *Tahiuktit* Society in Kugluktuk, with multi-year funding from the Rural Secretariat, as part of our national community capacity building model.

Under income support, we have taken the Co-op patronage payments made to all Arctic Cooperative members, and we've made those now that they're not income support eligible. We've taken the compensation payments to former students of Indian and residential schools just last month to make sure that they are not also income support eligible.

The food allowance benefit was also increased by ten percent in 2004 and five percent last year for an increase of 15 percent, which is the first increase that income support has received in many years.

The transition to work program was introduced to provide an allowance for those people who will be working at a position and need to travel to remote site.

We are also in the process right now, and I hope to have an announcement in a couple of weeks, on the things that the members have talked about here; one of those being the review of the senior fuel subsidy across Nunavut and looking at increasing it.

As minister of responsible for the Power Corporation and Energy it's been a very difficult and rewarding couple of years. The Power Corporation went through its General Rate Application process, as all the members have realized, and this has resulted in much public discussion and scrutiny of the corporation, its mandate, and its operations.

The Power Corporation, as evidenced in the last two audits by the Auditor General continues to show improvements in all areas of management, debt consolidation, revenue, and cost controls. The Auditor General has noted these improvements, and in conjunction with the URRC, the Utility Rate Review Council; it's providing a check and balance, as well as the recent independent review of the corporation, demonstrates that the corporation is on the right path.

The corporation continues towards alternative energy sources, as well as being aggressive with the capital program area of re-heat. The corporation recently opened up the first Nunavut Energy Centre, which will focus on electrical awareness, energy audits, and energy efficiency.

Nunavut has a costly addiction to oil, Mr. Chairman. The Power Corporation is moving aggressively to identify potential alternative energy sources, including hydro. Under the energy portfolio we have begun a process of an Energy Secretariat and developing a modern and pro-active energy strategy for Nunavut, which also includes oil and gas reserve alternative energy sources, and consumption.

As Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, the last two years have been a shifting of administrative, as well as the financial needs of the College in a more proactive stance. Senior managers are receiving monthly variance reports from the divisions; we've improved financial management and stability of the NAC operations.

The college was able to reduce its deficit by staying within budget so that the FMB funding approved last year can be applied entirely to that deficit. We've implemented the recommendations from the review, as the members know, shortly after becoming the Minister responsible for NAC, I have moved forward with an independent review of Nunavut Arctic College and of the 75 recommendations, 90 percent are now complete.

In concluding my statements, as I note my time is running, we have moved forward with the trades centre in Rankin Inlet, as well as two complementary expenditures; one being in Cambridge Bay so we could deliver mine training; and the other associated trades.

With that are my opening comments for the members on the Leadership Ministerial Review. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>*Applause*

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Picco. (interpretation) Just to remind the regular members that you can make a statement not exceeding three minutes in response to minister's comments. Are there any questions? Mr. Tootoo.

### **Members' Replies to Minister Picco's Remarks**

**Mr. Tootoo:** Comments and not questions I heard, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** I keep forgetting about my priority buttons. I correct myself in calling for statements from members to the minister's comments. Are there any statements? Mr. Tootoo.

**Mr. Tootoo:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want to thank the minister for his flattery, but a lot of people would say flattery will get you nowhere. I don't know if he realize this



or not, but I'm taken already and as far as I know, he is, too. So I hope it doesn't come as a surprise to Oopah as he has indicated coming out of the closet. I hope Brian heard that, our good friend Mr. Brian Twerdin, we had fun with our good friend Mr. Picco on comments like that.

Mr. Picco, you indicated that your list of portfolios that you look after and I noted in your comments on the *Education Act* where you make a very clear point of indicating that this has been the most extensive consultation ever on any legislation.

I just sincerely hope that this time around that the department learns from the last time where they had, when we asked about consultations, they had a big long list of consultations that they did, but none of the material to go with it, and hopefully that the government will sincerely take in the consultations, the feedback that it has had from the people and give them an opportunity and feedback on the draft legislation prior to it coming forward again because I think that was something that was missing in the last attempt at the *Education Act*.

So I hope that that's something that they plan on doing this time around other than sending a legal document to DEAs, and giving them two weeks to respond back on it with their thoughts. So I hope the department has learned from that.

I would also like to really thank Mr. Berger for his report. He has been saying some of the things that I've been saying for six years, and I really think that the Department of Education needs to look at a fundamental change in the way our system is delivered. I know in the past there have been all kinds of praises...

I'm out of time, I'm sorry. You're lucky Ed.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Tootoo. Thank you for your comments in response to the minister.

(interpretation) Mr. Alagalak, did you have your hand up? Mr. Alagalak.

**Mr. Alagalak** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to make a brief comment, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the minister for making an appearance and for increasing the rates for income support. It's not very large, but again, we are grateful that you were able to raise the amount. It has made a major improvement to the people out there.

I think we also have to realize, or you as the minister has to realize that we have to use the government monies prudently and also to look at savings. This has been one of the comments that I have heard repeatedly from the people that I represent. I think it would make things go a long way for the people on income support.

There are a lot of people who are misusing the monies that they receive through income support. I think we have to review the system again because there needs to be an improvement and we have to use the government monies properly.

In regard to the *Education Act*, the one thing that the people of Nunavut would like to see is Inuktitut included in the curriculum. If it's going to be in the Act, it has to be implemented, it is mandatory to have it implemented within the government.

There are quite a number of people who are not happy about the Inuktitut classes that have been provided, and in the same subject we have to look at the curriculum development. They are being provided at the community level. We have to look at the generators and the management of those services. Those are all my comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Alagalak. We do have to smile once in a while. Mr. Curley.

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know you have very good challenges as the Minister of Education and as well as there are conflicts; Income Support and Homelessness Minister. How many other great jobs have you got in your bag?

I do sincerely recognize those challenges, they are very great. In view of this format that we still have a very large drop out rate or failure rate with high school students in Nunavut. Having said that, I believe that I stated that I would ask the minister later to quote that exact percentage of the high school students that have succeeded.

I really truly believe that they need to be addressed daily because many of us found that they are not fully aware of what are obligations are for our students. Sometimes we spend a lot of hours on students who must stay in school.

I believe the government needs to focus on parents as well because they have never been through high schooling or college so they than can be aware that they can encourage their children to relax at home and study, and so on. Unilingual or not, they still are parents and they can still guide students to succeed.

I remember when I was a young kid I did not even read nor learn English and my dad told me that it will be very important for you to gain the ability to speak and learn English. I did not know why, I did not even question him. He said that will be helpful to your future. I thought I was doing great out at the hunting camp happily loved.

So minister, I ask you to focus and also the public expects you to focus on parents as well. Parents will be greatly...I can tell who the elders are supportive you with education. I met with them recently at my home constituency. I have not met with the presenters, but I will present it to the, as I indicated to you in my e-mail, local committee because the District Education Authority expects to hear from them.

Minister, I believe that we need to focus also people with special needs in Nunavut. We are not doing enough with special individuals that are interested in...

**Chairman:** I am sorry, Mr. Curley. You will have another opportunity to ask questions at a later time. I do not have any other names on my list.

Before we go ahead, I would like to remind the members that you have a total of 20 questions that you can ask and can be directed to a minister or divided up among the Cabinet Members. Mr. Curley.

### **Questions to Minister Picco**

**Mr. Curley:** I want to proceed with my question, I was going to make a statement but there were special individuals in Nunavut that do apply occasionally to high school or college programs at Nunavut Arctic College. What happens to the applicants when they do apply? Are they treated fairly like regular students or are they asked to wait or what happens to them? Thank you.

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

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the member's comments, I've made some notes. I just want to begin by suggesting that the member's comments and I hope we get some questioning out later, but I like the way the member phrased the difference between a drop out rate and a failure rate. I think that this is very important and to keep in mind, it was something that the Berger Report had mentioned.

On the issue of with students and special needs if I understood the question correctly, each student is judged by their own merits when they apply to the college. There are for example, certain academic standards that may be required before that person is taken into a college course. If there are special needs and a student is excepted into a course, academic study or program, for example if the person has a wheelchair, then special arrangements are made to help the student in cases like that.

For example, if it is a public building like a college, then we all know that it's wheelchair accessible. However, if there are other outstanding special needs that a person may have, they may be someone who is quadriplegic, hearing difficulties and again, each case will be judged on that merit and each center will be tasked to find accommodation for each student once they are accepted.

I'm not aware of any student who has applied to the college and who has been not allowed because of a disability. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Curley:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the minister's explanation as they are individuals looking for opportunities to gain knowledge as well as entry job markets.

In my constituency, we actually have special individuals that do have jobs, but like any other individual; they are looking for ways to expand their skills; these individuals that I'm referring to have a hearing and speaking disability, but they are successful, as they have gone through the extensive southern sign language training.

Two of them have actually applied to Arctic College programs, and I'm curious that in spite of the explanation that you made, would they be considered or because of the other matter of disability and not having teachers, would they be allowed to go through a course at Arctic College? Thank you

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Curly, Mr. Picco

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't want to speak on an individual case, but what I can say in general terms is that if the student has been accepted based on what ever the academic requirements of the program they are taking as an example, then they would be accepted into the program.

If they had special needs that need to be dealt with within the classroom, then the college would try to facilitate those types of special needs being met within the college setting. That would not stop those students from taking a given program per se.

Again, each case is looked at on its own situation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you. Do you have any further questions Mr. Curley? Are you done? Thank you.

I don't have anybody else on my list, but I would like to remind you that for you information, before we start tomorrow as to how many more questions you are allowed to ask. Member for Cambridge Bay, Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I welcome the Minister to the House. It's interesting to track questions. I would like to ask 10 questions, but then he'll be happier with four. So I have to be very careful there.

I appreciated the minister's opening comments. It was a very impressive list of achievements and initiatives that the minister and his officials are working on. I think they are all important of course.

One comment that you made in your report was about the Berger Report. The Berger Report of course was quite critical of the education in Nunavut. The minister said that you're moving to address some of those issues. Can the minister give more specific examples of what the Department of Education is doing or implementing to address the issues that were raised in the Berger Report? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We had to take the Berger Report in the context that the Berger Report was written.

It was written on behalf and for Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. with the Government of Nunavut to review certain articles under the land claim that we felt weren't being met, i.e. education and training.

Mr. Berger reviewed the K to 12 system. I had an opportunity to meet with him on several occasions; he spoke to many of the senior people within the department, as well as teachers, students, and graduates.

He also had an opportunity to look at the college system as well as the post-secondary situation that we have in Nunavut. What Mr. Berger said, and again, many people have not read Mr. Berger's Report; all they've seen is a few headlines in the newspapers.

As I have indicated in my opening comments, Mr. Berger's Report has been widely quoted in the National Post, the Globe and Mail, the Ottawa Citizen, the Toronto Star, the national news, and other media organizations.

If you read Mr. Berger's Report, he has said that education, in trying to create a bilingual society in Nunavut in the last 20 years has failed. He is saying that the model that was implemented, the 1982-83 model wasn't working.

What Mr. Berger does point out is that the bilingual education strategy that your government tabled in this House in 2004 is the right direction to take. I've been trying, as minister, along with our Cabinet colleagues to put in place that fundamental shift in the delivery of education.

Mr. Berger points out in his report that that is the right track to take. The member's question is: what have we done? By putting over 100 new positions in our schools, by looking at criteria and standards testing the board, by strengthening curriculum development resources, by looking at the adult learning strategy that we've unveiled, by putting in a bilingual education strategy, by working with curriculum resources and development, are all pieces of that puzzle we need to put in place.

Mr. Curley made an excellent point. Mr. Curley tried to differentiate between a failure rate and a dropout rate, and when you look at our drop out rate for every 100 hundred children that enter school, 25 will graduate. That's a 75 percent dropout rate.

If you look at our failure rate it is among the middle of the pack when we look at other jurisdictions in the country. We know, and I think Mr. Curley pointed this out, we know we need to get parents involved in education. If our students go to school and attend eighty percent of the time, they are passing.

A good example is in Arviat, you have got student staying or have gone from K-12 of just in Inuktitut, from K-12 in Arviat and they have just received some of the top academic honours, Alistair France's Xavier University in Nova Scotia which is, according to McLean's magazine was the top university in Canada. We have just seen Mr. Peterson's son graduate, again, a student from Nunavut, with a degree in Engineering.

These are the type of success stories that we need to talk about, we need the involvement of parents and if students attend school then most of them are very successful. We can not be taking our children out of school at the age of 13 and 14 and making them stay home and baby-sit. It is not acceptable to have grade nine and ten students at 14, 15, and 16 years of age, Mr. Chairman, pregnant. So those are types of things we are trying to work on with the fundamental shift in education. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Minister Picco. You probably thought you would get away with this but let's try to make our responses a little shorter and to the point. Mr. Peterson.

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that answer. I will continue on that note. Recently we had held the Nunavut Mining Symposium in Cambridge Bay and the minister was able to attend and we met with all the mining companies. I was fortunate enough to be able to attend several meetings with the minister and I thought it was a very good dialogue and it was good for the mining companies and the minister.

At least I thought there was, and the minister was able to take some information, comments from those folks, to work with in his department. In previous comments the premier said mining is important in Nunavut and mentioned a number of mining companies are opening mines or process of opening mines and several more are coming.

With all that in mind, can the minister perhaps give us a quick update on what you took away from those meetings in Cambridge Bay and how you are going to incorporate the information and comments from the mining officials into your departmental strategies to help train people for jobs in the mining sector? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you. Minister Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is being a little bit modest. I want to, on the record, thank the member for arranging several meetings with several key mining corporations in Cambridge Bay, including Mayor Marriot Wolfon of Baffin Land.

I met with a lot of different mining corporations on issues around training, as well as under my portfolio as Minister of Energy, as an example, we are in contact with some of the mining companies right now about providing energy, electrical energy generation for them which includes diesel and other alternatives and that is a result of our meeting in Cambridge Bay.

On the training side, what I took from the meetings, traditionally when we think about mining we think of those pick and shovel and someone under the glove, and what I took from the mining focus was that mining has really moved high tech. You really need to have a good education to get a job in mining, you are using all kinds of new technologies for example, underground mining now is driven by a computer where you are looking at a monitor and the machine will go in and do work so the high tech side of mining is really moved to the forefront.

We have our Adult Learning Strategy in place, we are doing an aggressive HEO training program, over 40 Nunavummiut have gone, actually, south into Merrickville where we have opened up this training facility and out of the Kitikmeot itself the Kit Corp. has been proactive in conjunction with the Government of Nunavut. A heavy equipment simulator will be brought into the community, I believe this fall, and we are starting to look at some opportunities for training with that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that answer. My next question has to do with the AESP Program that we discussed a couple times over the last two years and that the Department of Education was working on a proposal to the federal government in 2004.

I followed up with this on a few occasions over the years and I'm wondering if the minister can give us an update on where that proposal is at in terms of receiving approval from the federal government and the funding for the implementation of some of the recommendations in the programs in that application. The minister would know as it's probably quite important to Nunavut that we get some funding for this type of training. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the Aboriginal Employment Skills Program or AESP, Nunavut put a proposal into our federal government when it was a Liberal Government. At that time, the government of the day said that it was within the top three proposals they had received and that's where it's at.

I wrote letters, I met with various federal ministers, a new government has now come into place, and we are not sure where the Aboriginal Employment Skills Program funding dollars are. It's something similar to what we have seen with the new federal government; they have been pulling back on a lot of funding areas for example, under homelessness, we are still waiting to see if they are going to renew their commitment.

So the update for the member is that we are addressing the issue with the new minister, which is Minister Findlay, but we have not heard anything where the status of our application is, do we have to resubmit it, or even if there is an Aboriginal Employment Skills Program, again, in place by the new government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Peterson:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for that answer. I asked Minister Brown this same question. The relationship between the Government of Nunavut and the federal government is important.

I know the Minister of Education has a lot of meetings in Ottawa and around the country with his federal government counterparts to discuss our issues up here. I'm wondering if the minister could describe one or two specific things that he has accomplished as the Minister of Education in his meetings with his federal counterparts over the last two years. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Just to remind you that's your sixth question. Minister Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is correct. When you have an opportunity to serve in different portfolios within government, there is a familiarity with your provincial, your territorial, and your federal counterparts.

We have been successful in having more than one meeting in leveraging funds for Nunavut under various fronts. An example is under my Homeless Initiative that we have talked about. There was no money allocated to Nunavut for the Homeless Initiative because when the program first came out, it was for first nations on or off reserve and for urban aboriginal peoples.

To be urban, you had to be a city designate; we are talking 50,000 to 100,000 people in the city. In that case, nothing or nowhere in Nunavut was qualified, I was able to make a representation to the minister of the day, Minister Bradshaw, who actually came on invitation to Nunavut and then we were able to receive money under the SCIPI Program as an example of lobbying.

If we look at the issue of energy, working with Minister Nault, when he was in DIAND, we were able to access money after he met with us here in Iqaluit, as an example, for the Reheat Project.

When we look at the Department of Education, we have been able to leverage funds from our federal partners on several different areas, including the labour market development agreements and so on after meetings with our federal counterparts.

If we look at the immigration file that I'm also responsible for, we have had some opportunity with receiving a base funding to help us with the issues around immigration. It was a little over \$100,000. Again, that's base prorated per capita on the number of immigrants that would come to your jurisdiction.



If you are talking about success issues, you also talk about failures. My biggest failure, I believe not just mine but probably my other two colleagues from the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, had been in the early learning and childcare debates and meetings we had with Minister Dryden where we weren't able to sufficiently move Minister Dryden to include the three territories under base funding and above the per capita amounts that were allocated. So sometimes you have successes and sometimes you have setbacks.

So hopefully that will give the member an idea of some of the meetings that we are involved in and to another view of what happens at these types of meetings. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Kattuk** (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, also Minister Picco. I would like to ask two questions, one in regard to energy. The individuals who own their own homes, I know it's very expensive maintain your home when you own your own home because some individuals are now giving up on their payments because they can't afford to pay for the energy. I was wondering if the minister had ever considered how we can look into other alternative energy sources for Nunavut. Have you ever considered alternative ways of how we can use less diesel fuel? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman:** Thank you, Mr. Kattuk. Minister Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The member is correct in his opening comments on the question he talked about; how expensive it is to run your own home and the member is correct. That's why we increased the subsidy amount from 800 to 1,000 kilowatt hours per household, and if there are income support clients where people own their own home, where they have a lower threshold for income, then there is an opportunity through income support to help them out with their bills for the members. So that's something that they could take to heart.

Yes, we are looking at alternative energy sources. As I said earlier, we are looking at possibilities for hydro development right now. That seems to be the best way to go with the economies of scale. There are several locations within a 50 kilometre radius of Iqaluit for example. We are looking at some sites in the Keewatin region and there is an opportunity in the Kitikmeot. We are also looking at working with some of the mining companies on providing electrical energy generation for them at mining sites. The issue with wind continues to come up and there are issues with the technical aspects of wind when you're not on a grid system.

I don't want to get into technical repercussions of it, but I have been invited by the minister responsible to see the largest wind project on an island, which is in Prince Edward Island on the North Cape. So that's something that we are looking at hopefully in the next couple of weeks. There is an opportunity with our good friends there to see if

there is potential for those types of wind turbines to be located in Nunavut. We have to follow up some discussions, especially in costs and so on.

So the member is correct in his questioning that we are looking at opportunities for alternative energy. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman** (interpretation): Thank you, Minister Picco. Are you finished? Thank you. Mr. Evyagotailak.

**Mr. Evyagotailak**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Minister Picco, welcome. I just want to ask a question on the wind generators to the Minister of Energy.

In Kugluktuk, we have two wind generators, one at the fall and fell from the wind a couple years ago, I believe, probably about two years ago anyway. We normally had repaired that and I'm sure that I've heard that they were doing very good during windy days and I am just wondering if the minister is looking into putting more wind generators into the communities because we have a lot of wind in some communities to try and save some fuel.

I think that would be a really good thing to look into to try and get more wind generators even though they cost so much, but they would pay for themselves, I believe, and it doesn't cost money to use the wind. I am sure it's very environmentally good and I'm just wondering if the minister will be looking into getting more wind generators for Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Chairman**: Thank you, Mr. Evyagotailak. Minister Picco.

**Hon. Ed. Picco**: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There were two wind mills installed in Kugluktuk. The member is correct, one of the things I have seen a couple of times in Kugluktuk in the last several months on the ground and I have inquired with the Power Corporation last week in having that wind mill removed.

The problem with wind energy in Nunavut, there are two major issues with it.

We are looking at alternatives; we are looking at opportunities to install wind again. We have just completed a wind map with Environment Canada, which gives us the best locations for getting a wind farm, and we need to be able to do many wind turbines and we need to put out what we call a wind farm. So, we need like 15 or 20 of these wind turbines that you see in some communities so that you have some economy scales, number one.

Number two, you have to have the proper operations and maintenance funding in place because there a lot of high maintenance cost with the wind generating systems. There are some issues when it gets 30 below zero, for example in the north shore in Alaska where they had issues with them not working.

So there are some technical issues with the grid system, temperature, and so on. Those have been worked on, not just in Nunavut, but in the Faroe Islands, for example in Iceland, and some other locations.

So, the short answer to those questions is yes, we are reviewing opportunities for wind energy. I am hoping to be in a position where all business in those cases with all the Power Corporation folks in the distant future.

I have had discussions with our new federal government Minister Lung on accessing federal funds to see if we can move in the direction with them on Kyoto and some of the other issues in the environment and energy reduction of greenhouse gases. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

**Mr. Evyagotailak:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it has been a long day and I am sure that the minister is a bit tired too. I would like to report progress.

**Chairman:** Just give me one second please. Thank you. We will adjourn at 6:00 today or for tomorrow's procedure. Majority of the members, if they would, we can make changes.

We can stop and adjourn the meeting or we can adjourn at 6:00 p.m. So my question to the members: are you in favour of reporting progress and start at 10:00 a.m. in the morning?

**Some Members:** Agreed.

**Chairman:** Agreed. Thank you. We will adjourn for noon and to remind everyone before we start the meeting at ten o'clock in the morning if you want to find out how many more questions you can push. You can ask that question.

So we will just adjourn for now, but we will resume again with this Nunavut leadership forum ten o'clock in the morning. Thank you...

>>*Meeting adjourned at 17:50*

