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Speaker: The Honourable Paul Quassa, MLA

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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Minister responsible for Seniors; Minister
responsible for Suicide Prevention; Minister
responsible for the Workers' Safety and
Compensation Commission*

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(Aivilik)
*Minister responsible for Nunavut
Arctic College; Minister responsible
for the Nunavut Housing
Corporation*

Craig Simailak
(Baker Lake)

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik
(Iqaluit-Sinaa)
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responsible for Immigration; Minister
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Hon. David Joanasic
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Iqaluit, Nunavut**Thursday, September 24, 2020****Members Present:**

Hon. David Akeagok, Mr. Tony Akoak,
 Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak, Hon. George
 Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr.
 Pauloosie Keyootak, Hon. Lorne
 Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Mr.
 John Main, Ms. Margaret Nakashuk,
 Hon. Patterk Netser, Mr. Calvin
 Pedersen, Mr. David Qamaniq, Mr.
 Emiliano Qirngnuq, Hon. Paul Quassa,
 Mr. Allan Rumbolt, Hon. Joe
 Savikataaq, Mr. Craig Simailak, Ms.
 Cathy Towtongie.

>>*House commenced at 13:33*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Paul Quassa)

(interpretation): Good day. Can you say the opening prayer, please, Member Towtongie.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Member Towtongie. Good day, my colleagues and Nunavummiut.

With respect to our community of Igloolik, residents are in my thoughts especially and I wish them a good day. To the families who just lost a loved one, I recall them all.

Further, our community also held elections for the Qikiqtani Inuit Association. I am proud of and congratulate Louis Tapardjuk, who was the successful candidate for the QIA and who will now represent our community of Igloolik.

Finally, let us provide assistance and state our pride in our elders, our parents, and our children. Let us state our pride in them.

Let's proceed. Ministers' Statements.
 (interpretation ends) Premier Savikataaq.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

**Minister's Statement 451 – 5(2): 2020
 Council of the Federation Literacy
 Award Winner**

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the people of Arviat, I say "good day" to you.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today and speak about Nunavut's 2020 Council of the Federation Literacy Award recipient, Rankin Inlet's Charmaine Okatsiak.

Mr. Speaker, Charmaine's passion for helping youth learn and speak Inuktitut comes from her mother, an Inuktitut teacher, and father, a youth program coordinator. After years working at Leo Ussak Elementary School, Charmaine is now finishing the Nunavut Teacher Education Program at Arctic College.

In addition, Charmaine volunteers on local radio to practise and to encourage others to learn and speak Inuktitut. This year she launched the Inuktitut Revitalization Project, a summer program for youth, where she volunteers countless hours to apply for funding, recruit staff and participants, and develop course curriculum and program materials.

Mr. Speaker, what makes Charmaine so accessible is her openness about her

imperfect Inuktitut. She encourages youth to be unafraid to make mistakes in their efforts to strengthen their language, and leads by example.

Since 2004 the Council of the Federation Literacy Award has been presented to educators, volunteers, learners, community organizations, non-governmental organizations, and businesses in each province and territory, celebrating the valuable contributions made by Canadians in the field of literacy. The annual award celebrates the achievement, innovative practices, and excellence in literacy in each province and territory.

Mr. Speaker, because of COVID-19, we are unable to have a ceremony for Charmaine, so I ask my colleagues to please stand up and join me in congratulating her. Thank you, Charmaine, for your work. Your dedication and perseverance is a gift. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We are proud of those who receive awards. Ministers' Statements. Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College, Minister Netser.

Minister's Statement 452 – 5(2): 2020-21 Program Updates

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I send my regards to the people of Coral Harbour and Nauyasat. It's now fall and we will be enjoying the season, but let's be aware that when we go out hunting, the weather can change suddenly at this time.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues can appreciate, COVID-19 has required our institutions to adapt to our changing circumstances. This reality is also true for Nunavut Arctic College and the post-secondary and adult education it provides in this territory.

As my colleagues recently learned when we released the college's reopening plan, the Nunavut Teacher Education Program, or NTEP, is not accepting a first year cohort of students. I understand the disappointment, and I am too, and frustration Nunavummiut feel about this decision. I assure you this decision was difficult to make for the college, but operational considerations and a commitment to the quality of program to incorporate Inuktitut meant we needed to delay the first year.

I urge you to remember that years 2, 3, and 4 of the program are continuing. In this academic year the NTEP will be working with more than 80 students in eight Nunavut communities across our three regions. The Nunavut Teacher Education Program will support two cohorts of year 4 students. I would like to recognize the Department of Education for their commitment to allow flexible hiring for fourth year students in Kugaaruk and Iqaluit so they can complete their final courses while they are at work. (interpretation) Thank you, Department of Education.

(interpretation ends) I am pleased to announce that the college is achieving important milestones this academic year. Mr. Speaker, the community learning centre in Chesterfield Inlet is delivering the Office Administration Diploma Program for the first time. The Chesterfield Inlet Community Learning

Centre has delivered the certificate program for the past two years to build a pool of eligible students for the diploma program. The diploma program delivers courses on executive office procedures, human resources, and an introduction to northern government. I wish all students in Chesterfield Inlet all the best.

The Whale Cove Community Learning Centre is running the Office Administration Certificate Program as well for the first time. This certificate programs develops students' skills in computers, business mathematics, and communications.

Mr. Speaker, I assure Members of the House that the college continues to plan for the future. Over the last six months, college representatives continued to engage with their counterparts at Memorial University, fulfilling the spirit and intent of our partnership. We are all committed to making the most of this partnership and moving forward in a respectful manner.

I would like to thank the college's staff and students for the very professional way everyone adapted to course delays and changes during this pandemic. All of your hard work, resiliency, and commitment to adjusting to the new normal and higher learning are very inspirational. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Minister's Statement 453 – 5(2): Adapting the Small Business Support Program Delivery

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to reaffirm that my department has made available to Nunavut businesses up to \$5,000 in business relief and assistance with short-term working capital. The funding rolled out in late March and is being offered under the Small Business Support Program. It is geared to help small businesses that have been adversely affected by COVID-19 to meet their core operational needs during these challenging times.

As of August 31, my department has received a total of 95 business relief applications from Nunavut businesses, with 62 having already been approved and disbursed for a total of \$279,455.04. Our total program budget for the program, which also supports business start-ups and expansions, is \$823,000.

Lastly, I am happy to report that CanNor and the regional Inuit associations have developed specific programs to assist Nunavummiut too. My department has been working very closely with these organizations to ensure we are promoting all programs that are available to assist Nunavut businesses with short-term working capital. An overview of available business relief programs can be obtained by contacting our offices. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Health, Minister Hickers.

Minister's Statement 454 – 5(2): New Public Health Act and COVID-19

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At the start of the year, the new made-in-Nunavut *Public Health Act* came into effect. This new legislation could not have come at a better time. Only weeks later, Nunavut, along with the rest of the world, was faced with the current global pandemic caused by COVID-19.

Mr. Speaker and members, the new *Public Health Act* was instrumental in helping the Department of Health and the chief public health officer respond to the COVID-19 crisis. It allowed for the declaration of the public health emergency and the orders that have helped keep Nunavummiut safe during this difficult time.

Mr. Speaker and members, this important Act has allowed the Government of Nunavut to respond proactively to the threat of COVID-19 by granting the chief public health officer the powers needed to protect our loved ones from COVID-19 before the virus arrived in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, it must be noted that the *Public Health Act* also provides for protections that ensure people's rights and liberties are not unduly infringed upon during an emergency response. The new act enshrines Inuit societal values and the Nunavut context that was missing in the old legislation.

Mr. Speaker and members, I am pleased to see how the Department of Health staff, the Chief Public Health Office, my office and the Government of Nunavut as a whole utilized the new *Public*

Health Act in a way that has helped prevent the introduction of COVID-19 to the territory. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Acting Minister of Family Services, Minister Akeeagok.

Minister's Statement 455 – 5(2): Changes to Foster Care Rates in Nunavut

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Foster parents play an essential role in providing care to foster children. My department is committed to ensuring that children in need of foster care are adequately provided for. This means ensuring that foster parents are also provided with the necessary supports to ensure that children are placed in a safe, healthy and stable environment.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that the Department of Family Services was successful in increasing the foster care per diem rates that came into effective April 1, 2020 across Nunavut. Basic per diem rates will now range from \$58 to \$65 per day depending on the community. This reflects an increase from the previous per diem rates which ranged from \$43 to \$50 per day.

The new foster care per diem rates and amendments to the community zones more adequately reflect the cost of living in Nunavut. This will better support foster parents and families who continue to provide foster homes to those in need.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all past and current foster parents for providing safe

homes for children across the territory. I would also like to encourage all Nunavummiut to consider applying to become foster parents today. You can contact your local family wellness office or visit our website to learn more. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. (interpretation ends) Minister of Human Resources, Minister Kusugak.

**Minister's Statement 456 – 5(2):
Congratulating Sivuliqtiksat
Internship Program Graduates**

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Good day, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, our government has established multi-year Inuit employment plans for each department, which include many strategic training and development initiatives for Inuit employees. One ongoing and successful initiative is the Sivuliqtiksat Internship Program.

Sivuliqtiksat is an internship program designed to provide on-the-job training for Inuit to take on management or specialized roles and assist the government in meeting its obligations under Article 23 of the *Nunavut Agreement*. My department is responsible for funding and administration of the program, which supports a total of up to 16 internship positions that are housed in other departments and corporations.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize and congratulate the two most recent Inuit graduates of the Sivuliqtiksat Internship Program for successfully

completing their three-year internship and now working in their target positions within the government. They are:

- Wendy Bolt, Director of Kitikmeot Community Operations, ED&T in Kugluktuk; and
- Steven Curley, Budget Planner/Analyst with Culture and Heritage in Iqaluit.

They join 36 previous Sivuliqtiksat graduates who were supported to develop specialized skills and fill positions across multiple departments and communities and are now working in their target positions. Some have even advanced in their careers to take on leadership roles in our government.

Mr. Speaker, we encourage departments to utilize the Sivuliqtiksat program to contribute to the enhancement of their Inuit employment plans, along with other training and development initiatives developed by the Department of Human Resources targeted for Inuit employees, such as the Amaaqaarniq Education Leave Program, the Career Broadening Program, and the Training Travel Fund. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. There are no more. Let's proceed. Members' Statements. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, followed by the Member for Baker Lake. Member Main.

Item 3: Members' Statements

**Member's Statement 682 – 5(2):
Speech from the Throne**

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to make a statement on the Throne Speech.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, yesterday many of us across Canada followed very closely the federal government's Throne Speech as well as the Prime Minister's national address. Reading through the text of the Throne Speech, which I believe was around 6,700 words, more or less, I believe Premier Kenney put a precise number on it, reading through this speech, there's a lot to be encouraged by.

First of all, I would like to, on behalf of my constituency, acknowledge the leadership role that the federal government has played in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic to date. I'm encouraged to see the work that is being done in terms of securing a vaccine for all Canadians. I think it's important for our residents to realize that there will be an end to the COVID-19 pandemic; we just don't know when.

In terms of other topics, I see mention of daycares. I'll read a few quotes from the Throne Speech. Mr. Speaker, I believe it's important for Nunavummiut to follow what's happening on the federal stage because we are indeed a part of Canada. We can be left off the agenda from time to time. I know our territorial leaders are doing their best to keep us on the agenda, but this discussion also has to happen at the grassroots level.

There's talk of a "...long-term, sustained investment to create a Canada-wide early learning and childcare system."

Mr. Speaker, there's also talk regarding our elders. This of course is something that you know is very important to Nunavummiut in terms of gaps that exist in long-term care.

In terms of our health care system, I was encouraged to read this from the federal government: "The Government will ensure that everyone – including in rural and remote areas – has access to a family doctor or primary care team." This is something that is very important and has been very apparent to many of my constituents, the issues with gaps in health care.

Regarding gender-based violence, "The Government will accelerate investments in shelters and transition housing, and continue to advance with a National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence."

Mr. Speaker, there is a lot in this speech and I do not have a lot of time to go through this 6,000-word speech, but in short, I am encouraged and at the appropriate time I will have questions for our Premier to see what his opinion of this text is. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak, followed by the Member for Tununig. Member Simailak.

**Member's Statement 683 – 5(2):
Renovation Programs with the
NHC**

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to my colleagues, the staff and to the people of Baker Lake.

It is widely known that housing is a serious issue right across our territory. The shortage of housing units is always at the forefront of people's minds. It is right up there with health issues. That is how serious it is for Nunavummiut. We hear it on a regular basis. I know that about my colleagues; they hear it all the time.

While I stand up here, I wish I would be standing ecstatic that my community of Baker Lake was slated for construction of new housing units, but unfortunately Baker Lake is low on the NHC list for new construction.

Mr. Speaker, the only thing I can do right now is look at existing units that are in Baker Lake. I am thinking about the people who are already occupying a housing unit. We want them to feel comfortable in their unit, but sadly we often hear about the conditions of public housing units, such as drafty doors or drafty windows. When there is a blizzard, there is snow coming into the porch, even though the door is closed.

Mr. Speaker, I am interested in learning about renovation programs for Nunavut Housing Corporation units. With that being said, at the appropriate time I will be directing my questions to the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Tununiq, followed by the Member for Aivilik. Mr. Qamaniq.

Member's Statement 684 – 5(2): Pond Inlet High School Graduates

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good day" to the people of Tununiq. I apologize for not being able to attend two days of session due to a cold.

Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today in order to congratulate this year's graduating class at Pond Inlet's Nasivvik High School.

(interpretation ends) One of the many ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we live our lives now is how we mark such occasions as high school graduations.

Mr. Speaker, this year's graduation ceremony was a socially distanced event with a limited number of participants. Although I could not be with our students and teachers in person, my heart was with them all.

This year's graduates are:

- Jesse Apak
- Faith Kadloo
- Marlene Kippomee
- Chantal Koonoo
- Tiffany Kublu
- Joshua Omik
- Melissa Ootoovak
- Helena Pewatoalook
- Dustin Pewatualuk

Mr. Speaker, teachers include Esther Arnakallak, Rimma Berktusunova, Eileen James, Moses Koonark, Shanavas Mammakkanath, Meeka Qamaniq, and Anisa Suno.

Mr. Speaker, our young people are entering an uncertain world. As leaders, we have a responsibility to do all we can to ensure that they have opportunities to pursue further education and training.

The community of Pond Inlet is very proud of our graduating class and I ask all members to join me in extending our warmest congratulations to them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We're very proud of the young people when they graduate from school. We're proud of them and we are also proud of the people of Pond Inlet.

Members' Statements. Member Patterk...I'm sorry. Member Netser.

**Member's Statement 685 – 5(2):
Naujaat High School Graduates**

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm the Member for Aivilik.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday I recognized graduates from Coral Harbour, and today I would also like to recognize and congratulate the graduates from Naujaat. I am very proud of the 16 graduates. Here are the following graduates:

- Lou Kopak
- Melanie Kokseak
- Kenneth Katokra
- David Kringayark
- Jeannie Katokra
- Jenny Nuluk
- Diana Kringayark
- Amber Kringayark
- Adriane Tegumiar

- Ernie Nanorak
- Qavvak Nimiqtuq
- Susie Siusangnark
- Aiden Kabvitok
- Aalu Qilluaq
- Jenna Alagalak
- Kasandra Katokra

We celebrate with them and we are proud of them. My fellow residents of Naujaat were also proud of the graduates. You are a source of pride. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We are very proud of the graduates.

Members' Statements. I have no more names on my list. Let's proceed. Item 4. (interpretation ends) Returns to Oral Questions. (interpretation) Minister of Education, Minister Joanasie.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

**Return to Oral Question 940 – 5(2):
Financial Assistance for Nunavut
Students**

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, Nunavummiut and members.

Mr. Speaker, I have a return to an oral question asked by Adam Arreak Lightstone, Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Question No. 940 – 5(2), the day before yesterday, September 22, 2020, the subject is Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students.

The question is:

“...of the 418 applicants, how many of those are new applicants, for example, those not applying to continue studies or continue into future years of the program? Is that figure average or has that also seen a substantial reduction?”

The response is:

As of August 7, 2020, there were 418 applications to the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students program for the 2020-21 academic year. Of the 418, 228 were new applicants and 190 were continuing applicants.

For updated figures as of September 22, 2020, there were 273 new applicants and 232 continuing applicants, for a total number of applicants as of September 22 at 505.

This reflects a decrease in applications from previous years. This decrease is likely due to COVID-19, as many other jurisdictions in Canada have also experienced a decrease in applications for funding this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Returns to Oral Questions. (interpretation) Let's proceed. Item 5. (interpretation ends) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. As we all know, the gallery is now being used by the Chamber and therefore we won't be having any visitors for this session.

(interpretation) Let's proceed.
(interpretation ends) Oral Questions.
(interpretation) Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, followed by the Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet. Member Lightstone.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 953 – 5(2): Travel Restriction Order Exemptions

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Health and the topic is exemptions to the chief public health officer's travel restriction order.

Mr. Speaker, the travel restriction order issued by the CPHO is intended to reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 entering Nunavut. However, I believe that the amount of exemptions defeats the purpose.

Mr. Speaker, section 15 of the travel restriction order indicates that "...all travel to Nunavut that originated from any inter-jurisdictional border other than" the travel bubbles is "prohibited with the following exceptions..."

Mr. Speaker, the exemptions on the travel restriction order are found on pages 4, 5, and 6, and there are 21 different categories of exemptions. As you can see here, I have highlighted many, of which 13 in total which have a complete exemption to the mandatory two-week isolation period.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents share my concern regarding the number of exemptions. My first question is related section 15(e), which provides a complete exemption to the mandatory two-week isolation period to "Persons providing services in the course of importation/exportation of goods and other supply chain workers, including those persons who are necessary to maintain supply chain transportation services."

I would like to ask: can the minister indicate how the chief public health officer's office defines supply chain workers and why this was included? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Hon. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the question. There are many different facets that could be termed into the description of the supply chain worker.

I'm going to go back to just the total general description for critical employees. On the website, as I'm sure the member has done his own research, a critical employee is defined as "an employee who has an urgent and substantial need to enter Nunavut from any place in Canada other than the Northwest Territories in order to complete work that is critical to the well-being of the territory."

Mr. Speaker, I do take a little bit of offence to this automatic exemption from the two-week isolation. All applicants have to provide their travel history over the past three weeks, their name and birthdate, a statement that the employee is asymptomatic, a brief explanation as to why the employee is deemed critical, and the measures that will be taken by the employee to self-isolate outside of work hours.

There are criteria associated with these applications. It is not a rubber-stamp process. Each case is analyzed with the information by members of the chief public health office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad that this chief public health officer's office does provide a certain level of scrutiny when it comes to providing exemptions, but again, the definition of supply chain worker is still unknown.

Moving on to my next question, can the minister indicate what organizations have requested exemptions for their employees under the supply chain worker exemption, as well as how many requests have been received and approved? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. It would be more appropriate if you referred to me as the Speaker. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: My apologies, Mr. Speaker. I am just getting the most recent numbers. As of September 21, there have been 2,867 applications and denied, 259, but a number of those came from the travel bubble from the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For my last question I would like to ask the minister: does the supply chain worker exemption include such employees as those working in grocery

stores and/or airline ramp or cargo attendants? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If there isn't enough local capacity at whatever airline or carrier that is needed to provide that service, then it varies. I know there are people who do come up from the south under the airline exemptions. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, followed by the Member for Pangnirtung. Ms. Towtongie.

Question 954 – 5(2): Housing Issues in Chesterfield Inlet

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the people of Chesterfield Inlet and Rankin Inlet, I say “good day” to you.

My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

I want to begin by proudly acknowledging the members and staff of the Chesterfield Inlet Housing Association, along with most of the board members. I want to congratulate them for their hard work, and they are women. They are:

- Elizabeth Ippiak, Chairperson;
- Leonie Mimialik, Vice-Chairperson;
- Kelly Kadjuk-Aggark, Board Member;
- Jeannie Tautu;

- Valerie Ipkarnerk;
- Lucy Issaluk; and
- Georgina Ipkarnerk.

Those are the individuals that wrote correspondence to the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

The Chesterfield Inlet Housing Association recently wrote correspondence to the Nunavut Housing Corporation in which a number of concerns were raised. Under the current public housing allocation methodology, there are 25 communities that are on the needs list and Chesterfield Inlet ranks 24. However, Chesterfield Inlet is one of the oldest communities in Nunavut, and you are aware that many of the housing units are advanced in age.

In June of this year the Nunavut Housing Corporation issued a request for proposals for a construction cost review. The RFP also indicates that the current public housing construction allocation methodology is to be reviewed. I would like to ask: can the minister confirm that one of the factors that the Nunavut Housing Corporation will use to determine public housing allocation in the future is the age of units in a community? When they are going to construct, do you consider the age of the unit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for raising that matter. As I also once represented Chesterfield Inlet as an MLA, I am aware of the age of the

buildings in question and I have tasked an official to look into that.

As you may be aware, this House has a process where communities are allocated units, which is the subject of this study. Perhaps this will apply more for communities that haven't received housing in a number of years. Once the study is complete, the communities may also receive units. I think it was last month where the study was to be let, and we just recently signed off on the contract. We should have a copy of the report on June 20, 2021 and even as early as March, but it will be available in one of those months. I believe it would be March. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary question, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for his response. The recent letter from the Chesterfield Inlet Housing Association identified a number of serious issues with the community's aging housing stock. Last year the Legislative Assembly approved over \$6.3 million in maintenance and improvement funding for public housing units. The housing corporation received additional federal funding. Can the minister clarify how the housing corporation determines community allocations for this funding and can he indicate if the amount being provided for Chesterfield Inlet will be reviewed? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We work in conjunction with the local housing associations and they are the primary assessors of the condition of their housing stocks. They submit their original assessment report to the NHC, and we provide the funding for the LHOs of approximately \$155 million for maintenance improvements for the units and this amount is allocated to the 25 communities to fund improvements to local units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary question, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister will recall, I have advocated on a number of occasions for a review of the current public housing rent scale, which has been in place for some time. Can the minister confirm when this will take place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Patterk Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Regarding the question my colleague posed, just last month we dealt with that exact subject she referred to, as a contract was signed with the contractor who will review this matter. March 2021 is when we anticipate having the report in our hands. They are including the rent scale review in looking at the tenants living in the public housing units to determine if they are paying more than the unit is worth, for example, and they will conduct a comprehensive report and once the

report has been received, we will table it in this House, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Pangnirtung, followed by the Member for Baker Lake. Member Nakashuk.

Question 955 – 5(2): COVID-19 and the Aviation Sector

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, people of Pangnirtung and my colleagues.

My questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

As the minister is well aware, flying has become a very different experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The mandatory use of masks and other measures are a reminder of the unusual times in which we now live.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the federal government's Department of Transport has introduced pre-boarding temperature screening at a number of large Canadian airports. Nunavummiut travelling back home at southern gateways will experience these checks.

Can the minister clarify what actions are being taken in respect to implementing temperature screening at Nunavut airports for passengers and aircrew?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For that portion of temperature

checks with the air passengers, that's under the federal regulations, so they so far have a short list of which airports would require temperature checks. That has been implemented. As a territory we haven't implemented any of that within our own airports. As we have been working very closely with the regulator on this, I do know that some airlines, if you do go on a charter, do have temperature checks and airlines such as Calm Air on certain parts of the legs are happening right now within Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your first supplementary question, Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister mentioned, this is legislated by the federal government, but I also want to ensure that there is some work or recognition in terms of the department releasing the strategy titled *Canada's Flight Plan for Navigating COVID-19*, which is imposed by the federal government. Can the minister indicate what other new federal requirements have been introduced in respect to operations at Nunavut airports? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Akeegok.

Hon. David Akeegok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are different measures that have been taking place that have been instituted, such as the requirement that you cannot change seats when you're flying. That way we can do some contact tracing in the event that there is

COVID within the air. That has been implemented. Also having to wear masks at all times while you're on a flight, those are implemented. There are a number of safety checks that have been implemented within and we comply with that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary question, Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I recognize that it would be unrealistic to expect airline and charter flight crews to go through a 14-day isolation period prior to every flight to Nunavut. Can the minister describe what contingency plans are in place to isolate flight crews in the event that an aircraft goes mechanical while on the ground at a Nunavut airport? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Minister Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I really have to applaud our chief medical officer and their office for this. They've had very good guidelines and good actions when needed to be taking place. As we all know, sometimes planes do come here unexpectedly, either due to weather or for medical. When an airline is coming unexpectedly, they notify and they take... . Our chief medical officer's office does take swift actions and I applaud them for doing that. Working with our airlines, working with Transport Canada, you're talking minutes that's coming in and with proper planning, they have been able to implement that, so I'm proud of that.

As our Minister of Health mentioned, there are contingency plans for any scenario and that work is being done. So far we have done tabletop exercises on a lot of what-ifs, even on the airline situation and keeping our supply chains going, which airlines is our only road link and we will need air to go to each of our communities in an event there is COVID. We have those contingencies in place and safety has always been our paramount [concern]. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Baker Lake, followed by the Member for Kugluktuk. Member Simailak.

Question 956 – 5(2): Housing Issues in Baker Lake

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, information published by the Nunavut Housing Corporation indicates that Baker Lake ranks 21 out of 25 in the ranking order for new public housing units. I recognize that the current public housing allocation methodology is based on the needs list.

Can the minister indicate what other factors will be considered as part of the Nunavut Housing Corporation's review of the public housing allocation methodology? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Patterk Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the... (interpretation) How does this work? I don't know if you can hear me. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. Mr. Speaker, I encourage the member from Baker Lake to reach out to his constituents and have them apply to the local housing association for homes if they're 19 and over.

It is true we are doing the construction allocation methodology, which we signed a contract just last month I believe it was, and we expect to have a report sometime in the next fiscal year. My hope is that with this methodology being reviewed, some communities that have not seen housing construction due to our aging stock, that haven't seen any construction for many years, they will be included in the housing allocation.

However, keep in mind that we are in a severe housing crisis and the little funding we get from the federal government does not meet the needs of Nunavummiut. It's going to be really difficult to, again, spread the few dollars that we have throughout Nunavut to address our housing crisis.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. The Nunavut Housing Corporation's annual capital estimates include funding for the maintenance and improvement of public housing units across the territory. Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm for me how much funding has been allocated for Baker Lake during the current 2020-

21 fiscal year and can he clarify how the corporation works with our local housing authority to determine which specific projects will go ahead? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Patterk Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we look at per community how many units for public housing they have, then we divide up the funding that we get from the government in terms of how much each community will be receiving.

As for the numbers he is asking for, for his community, I don't have that information, but I can get back to the member on that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response and I look forward to seeing those numbers.

Mr. Speaker, in June of this year the Nunavut Housing Corporation issued a request for proposals for a construction cost review. Can the minister confirm if this review will examine ways to enhance the maintenance and improvement program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.

(interpretation ends) Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Minister Netser.

Hon. Patterk Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We give the local housing authorities funding to maintain our public housing stock and throughout Nunavut we give \$155 million to maintain our stock and of that \$155 million, \$50 million goes towards maintenance, including administration. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Gjoa Haven, followed by the Member for Netsilik. Member for Gjoa Haven, Member Akoak.

Question 957 – 5(2): Isolation for Nurses

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) I also say “good day” to all the residents of Gjoa Haven.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health and this is in regard to all the frontline workers who need help. I would like to thank the Minister of Economic Development for trying to keep them in their places.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my colleagues have asked questions about pandemic measures and specifically about isolation policies for critical workers and essential workers. I am sure we can all agree that our community nursing staff are both essential and critical workers in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clearly explain why Nunavut’s full-time

indeterminate nursing staff are required to isolate when they return from a trip down south whereas agency nurses, who are travelling in and out of the territory, do not have to isolate? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That encompasses all civil servants across the Government of Nunavut, not just nurses. There were discussions with the NEU. There were discussions with different groups within the workforce in recognizing that it is a challenge, but at the same time we have put in non-essential travel to the south. Anyone who does choose to leave the territory knows that these conditions are in place. It’s unfortunate that more people haven’t taken advantage of holidaying in Nunavut. I have talked to so many people who have never really appreciated the summer in Nunavut until now, so there are a lot of people who are very appreciative of the measures that we have put into place. It is challenging.

With our indeterminate nurses, there is an opportunity to use the professional development money allocation that they have during the time that they’re in isolation, as nurses are provided that as part of the Nunavut nursing association with the NWT. They do have that option to be able to provide, same as all civil servants that, if they can be justified, working from home or working from isolation can be achieved, then that is an option that people can apply for with their supervisor. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your first supplementary question, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The full-time nurses that we do have, we have been working very hard to have full-time nurses within Nunavut. I know you have and you have tried to keep them within Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, the disparity in benefits between agency nurses and full-time indeterminate nurses, who have made a commitment to work in Nunavut for a number of years, has often been an issue and may even have an impact on the recruitment and retention of nursing staff. Mr. Speaker, the government's isolation policy appears to be another example of this disparity.

Mr. Speaker, given that all nurses, with their expertise in health issues, are well aware of the steps needed to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, will the minister commit to reviewing the isolation policies for Nunavut's nursing staff so that all nurses travelling into the territory are treated equally and permitted exemptions from isolation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the utmost respect for our health care professionals. I think all of us can attest to how often I have stood here in this House and stood up for them and expressed my appreciation for the very challenging conditions that they work under. This is exasperated with the COVID situation.

The member talks about fairness and I think that's ultimately the word that we have to use. As a government we can't pick and choose which professions that we decide to show favouritism for or put other people like teachers, nurses, and other civil servants; engineers. There are many people within our civil service that are essential and critical to our operations. To pick and choose which professions out of that, to me, is not fair to the other civil servants.

We had to make a standardized decision and it's something that, unfortunately, whether we like it or not, non-essential travel is highly discouraged right now. I don't recommend people travelling to the south if there's any way possible to stay here and enjoy your holidays here. I know it's hard. There are people all across the world that are separated from their families and loved ones, people not being able to attend funerals and births of their grandchildren and relatives, and visiting sick elders.

It's challenging for people all over the world and we're just going to have to continue to live with these measures until there are reliable vaccines or treatment for COVID-19. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I don't know how you differentiate between travelling nurses and indeterminate staff. Why are they different? I still cannot understand that myself. We do allow travelling nurses to travel, it seems, as they please. We do

not allow full-time staff such as nurses as much freedom.

Mr. Speaker, it has been brought to my attention that nurses, we are talking about nurses, who are coming back or going out of the territory after isolation, are no longer permitted to travel with their pets. Mr. Speaker, can the minister clarify whether this is indeed the case and, if it is, can he explain why this restriction has been put in place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure where this information is stemming from. I do know that there have been a couple of challenges in some of the isolation hotels that don't accept pets, but there is no government directive to tell people that they can't travel with pets.

Mr. Speaker, if you allow me, I would like to address the member's beginning. Whenever any government employee applies for leave, the associated department is responsible for back-filling that position, and if that position is a critical worker, they have applied for leave, so they know the situation that they are going into. With the demand of having to bring that critical worker in, it is to cover that leave.

If we are short a nurse, as an example, in a community and a nurse leaves, we have to bring in another nurse on basically an emergency basis. That is why critical workers do bypass if they are eligible to bypass the isolation.

Again, I can't thank all health care staff, not just nurses, but we rely so heavily upon them. That is why we have taken the stance that if we can provide some supports to them to help through isolation such as their professional development time, then that is something that they can apply for. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, followed by Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove. Member Qirngnuq.

Question 958 – 5(2): Petroleum Products

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good day" to my fellow community members, my colleagues, and the people of Nunavut.

(interpretation ends) My questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services.

As the minister will recall, I asked him a number of questions during our recent winter sitting about the issue of petroleum products, including fuel spills. At that time I noted that there have been some recent incidents in my constituency.

Mr. Speaker, the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting many things, including the ability to fly in technicians on short notice to repair damage to tank farms or other fuel-related infrastructure. Can the minister describe what actions his department has been taking to develop contingency plans in this area? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Community and Government Services, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleague for that question. The Petroleum Products Division right now is undertaking an ongoing, active process. In the overall CGS department, we always try to be ready in case an emergency arises in the Petroleum Products Division or in any other sector.

With respect to his constituency communities and the incident that occurred, it happened at an unfortunate time, as it seems they always do. The emergency spill response depends on the fuel type that was spilled, and they try to immediately clean up the spill to prevent it from dispersing. This urgency to clean it up applies throughout Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qirngnuq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During our winter sitting, I asked the minister about the status of fuel-related incidents that took place at the Kugaaruk and Taloyoak airports. Can the minister confirm if all necessary repairs and upgrades have now been completed? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Community and Government Services, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With regard to

his question about fuel in those communities at the airports, to my understanding, yes, the work has been completed and the repairs have been tested to see if they have been implemented. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for taking care of this while COVID-19 is in Nunavut and all over the world.

(interpretation ends) The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the transportation sector. Can the minister update the House today on the status of this year's fuel resupply to the communities? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Community and Government Services, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleague for that question. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everything within the sector it possibly could, both within and beyond Nunavut, throughout the world. The fuel resupply carriers are also impacted by this pandemic.

The communities receive their annual fuel supply, with some communities getting two or three ships to fill all of the fuel tanks. With the communities that run out faster, mostly due to having smaller capacity tanks, as soon as the ship is able to travel to the community, they receive a temporary fill-up, so to

speak, and in the fall they receive the final shipment prior to the end of the shipping season. All of the communities have been reached by the fuel resupply ships, including Pond Inlet, as all communities are required to be resupplied. As a matter of fact, just last week the ship began its travel to Igloolik.

When the ships are plotting their trips to the communities, as was the practice pre-COVID-19, the PPD observers would board the ships, inventorying all of the fuel offloaded to each community. They would remain with the ship as it offloaded fuel to its listed communities, but currently due to the limitations placed on us by COVID-19, our PPD observers can no longer board the ships so as not to face work health hazards. However, they still have to travel to communities via charter usually to inventory the fuel being offloaded, so the PPD officials responsible for that community has to be there to observe, although they cannot board the ships.

Nonetheless, they confirm the transferral of the fuel supply to the communities, and that is how our department is dealing with this challenge. When our employees are able to travel through scheduled air travel, they take advantage, but charters are used when schedules don't match with the ships or if no planes are scheduled. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member Arviat North-Whale Cove, followed by the Member for Tununiq. Member Main.

Question 959 – 5(2): Federal Government Speech from the Throne

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

(interpretation ends) As we all know, the Speech from the Throne to open the Second Session of 43rd Parliament of Canada was delivered yesterday. I would like to ask for our Premier's reaction on a couple of fronts; the first is infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, to quote from the pages 19 and 26 in the Speech from the Throne, it says, "...over the next two years the Government will...invest in all types of infrastructure (...) particularly for Indigenous Peoples and northern communities." It also mentions later on, closing "the infrastructure gap in Indigenous communities..."

I would like to ask our Premier for his reaction to these statements contained in the Speech from the Throne.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.
(interpretation ends) Premier Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every interaction I've had with federal ministers and with the Prime Minister, on every occasion, I have always emphasized our lack of infrastructure within Nunavut, within the north generally, but within Nunavut. My saying has been that we are so far behind that we're not even at the starting line and that the federal government has to do some nation-building within Nunavut

so that we can at least get to the starting line.

It's good to read here and read the comments that they will work on filling this infrastructure gap. As I stated before at one time when I was at a conference, I was asked, "Why should Canadians and the federal government invest in the north?" My answer was pretty simple: because we're Canadians. We're a part of Canada and we shouldn't be left behind. I'm glad to read and hear what the federal government is saying about closing the infrastructure gaps. I am very hopeful and I hope that we will see the fruits of the statement soon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) *Ma'na*, Premier. I also hope to see the fruits or, maybe in Nunavut, we should say that we hope to see the *tunnuq* or something along those lines, *nikku*, whatever you prefer.

Mr. Speaker, on the housing file, the speech also mentions, "The Government will add to the...National Housing Strategy...by increasing investments to rapid housing in the short term, and partnering with not-for-profits and co-ops in the mid- to long-term." My next question for the Premier is: what is his reaction in terms of what this statement means or could mean for Nunavut?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Premier Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope that it means that there will be an infusion of money for housing within Nunavut because the housing minister was queried quite a few times today about housing needs. Housing is in critical crisis, as the minister said and as many of you MLAs have said, within Nunavut. We are short over 3,000 houses right now as we speak and the number of houses that we make within Nunavut that the Government of Nunavut makes is not even keeping up with the demand that is starting. We don't even fulfill the demand. We are going further behind on our housing needs instead of lessening the gap there.

I'm hopeful that there will be some monies coming here so that we can get housing needs. As I have stated before too, there's nothing good that comes out of overcrowded houses. There are a lot of social issues, violence issues, mental health issues, family violence issues, and school attendance issues that come out of overcrowding houses. The easiest way to fix that is to build more houses. It's not rocket science. If you're short houses, you need more houses. That's a start in terms of addressing our needs. I'm hopeful that there will be some announcements as to more funding for our territory for housing needs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Premier. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, within the speech it also mentions distinctions-based funding, specifically it mentions a distinctions-based mental health and

wellness strategy for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. It also mentions "...the infrastructure gap in Indigenous communities, working on a distinctions-basis with First Nations, Inuit," and it goes on from there, Mr. Speaker.

My last question for the Premier is: when you see the language used, "distinctions-based," and it makes reference to Inuit communities, is there any clarity over what that means? Does it mean that the Nunavut government is at the table? Does it mean that the Nunavut government is not involved? How is the Premier seeking clarity on this topic? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Premier Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As this just came out yesterday, we are seeking clarity on distinctions-based funding, but I have always stated that if the funding source is above and beyond what we normally get, I will commit that the more funding we can get for our needs, if it's above and beyond our needs, I would go to the... . In our case here in Nunavut, it's to Inuit distinction. I welcome it.

In terms of what it means, I guess we will find out more in the coming days about what distinctions-based funding means and if there are any funding requirements or service providers, then I expect that we would be at the table to find out what it means because we are the service providers. We have the numbers. We know what Nunavut needs. We have been giving services to Nunavummiut for all these years. If there's any new distinctions-based

funding, then I would hope that we would be there at the table at the beginning so we could partake in it and so we could make the outcomes better and make the outcomes so that the resources get to the people who need the resources. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Tununig, followed by the Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak. Member Qamaniq.

Question 960 – 5(2): COVID Testing for Ore Carrier Crew

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister may be aware, Baffinland Iron Mines has been given permission to transport six million tons of iron ore from Milne Inlet to Europe this year, perhaps going to China, using between 70 and 75 ore carriers.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm for this House whether the crew of these vessels will be tested for COVID-19 before they arrive at Milne Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Crews of those ships would only be interacting with mine employees; they wouldn't be interacting with any members of any of the communities and they would be prohibited from doing so. At this point they would be treated like mine workers and would fall under that category

of...we wouldn't be testing them. There would just be oversight to make sure that there are still continual communications as there have been with the mining companies and the office of the chief public health officer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Now, the Government of Nunavut is working hard on preventing the spread of the coronavirus. Can the minister tell us whether Baffinland Mines will test the crew again before they leave the Milne Inlet Port? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure what measures the Baffinland mine would take with testing ship workers, but depending upon when the ship crew shifts happen, most times those members are on the ship for weeks at a time, so it would have very little chance of contracting COVID-19 in most cases. Where there are crew resupplies, I'm sure the shipping companies are very aware of what happened like in cruise ships of how fast the COVID-19 can spread and I have to assume that they're taking appropriate measures, but I will reinforce the fact that crews from these ships like the resupply ships that we had here in town and all over the territory do not have contact with anyone onshore at the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his answers. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Baffinland COVID-19 tests have to be confirmed by another lab before the results are final. If a presumptive case of COVID-19 is found on one of these tests, will public health measures ensure that the iron ore carrier is held in port until the second lab result is available? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Health, Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, these are voluntary testing at the corporate level; they're not mandated by Nunavut or any other health entity. That measure would not be enforced or take place. Whatever on-site testing that the mining companies do, if there is a presumptive positive, which we have had and have had a positive case come out of that as well, that it is substantiated by our chief public health office team, but as there is no direct contact with any communities, we have been leaving the isolation and the procedures to the mining companies, along with informing Nunavummiut, as we have and will continue to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Member Lightstone.

Question 961 – 5(2): Clare’s Law for Nunavut

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, as you and my colleagues are aware, I have been strongly advocating for the introduction of a Clare’s Law in Nunavut. This initiative would be of significant benefit to protecting vulnerable Nunavummiut from the threat of domestic violence abuse.

As the minister will recall, we exchanged correspondence on this issue over the summer. In my letter I noted that Saskatchewan’s version of Clare’s Law recently came into force. However, it has come to light that the RCMP’s ability to cooperate fully in administering legislation of this type is being hindered by federal legislation.

As the minister is aware, I have written directly to the responsible federal minister and Nunavut’s parliamentarians on this issue, urging them to take the necessary actions to amend federal law. I would like to ask: will the minister commit to also formally writing to her federal counterpart on this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Justice, Minister Ehaloak.

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for his question. Department officials have had the opportunity to look more into Clare’s Law since the member had brought up this issue in the 2020 fall session.

At this time we are not pursuing this legislation. Instead we are moving on focused and direct supports, including amendments to the *Family Abuse Intervention Act* and the *Labour Standards Act*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your first supplementary question, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I noted in my initial question, Saskatchewan now has a Clare’s Law in place. Both the provinces of Newfoundland and Alberta have passed similar statutes. Mr. Speaker, two days ago Alberta formally joined Saskatchewan in calling on Ottawa to ensure the RCMP uses provincial legislation that allows police to warn those at high risk.

Mr. Speaker, there is strength in numbers, so I would like to urge the minister to work with her provincial colleagues to ensure that Ottawa responds to our concerns. I would like to ask if she would commit to doing so. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Justice, Minister Ehaloak.

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for his question. In this Legislative Assembly, members have discussed the desire to provide offenders with support and forgiveness in the priority for communities and families. Through this, we work through a restorative justice program to ensure that those who have

or are offenders have the opportunity to take the programs, the Department of Justice, through their programs and services to ensure that they can bring back to their community and that they don't reoffend. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to first express my disappointment that the Department of Justice and the minister have decided not to pursue creating a Clare's Law in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, when I initially brought up the topic of Clare's Law on February 18, 2020, I pointed out the high rates of child sexual abuse and the fact that nearly half of all of the individuals on the registered sexual offenders list have been charged with offences against children.

Mr. Speaker, at that time I asked the minister to set a precedent by expanding a Nunavut's version of Clare's Law to give authorities the ability to proactively disclose information that could protect vulnerable children. Mr. Speaker, for my last question, I would like to ask the minister if she or the officials within the Department of Justice had considered that option. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Justice, Minister Ehaloak.

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for his

question. As the member and I, this item is very dear to our hearts, one of the main questions that persist with this Clare's Law is the lack of knowledge about an inmate's or partner's history of violent behaviour presents an imminent risk to Nunavummiut. Given the size of our communities and our close relationships with our community, it is likely not the lack of information that is the principle risk to the individuals.

At this time I cannot commit, but once the federal government responds to your questions regarding Clare's Law and how they feel and how they would work towards Clare's Law, at this time the Department of Justice will not be doing any more research on Clare's Law until we hear back from the federal minister on your letter. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members will note that the time for question period has expired and we will proceed to Item 7. Item 7. Written Questions. Mr. Lightstone.

Item 7: Written Questions

Written Question 071 – 5(2): Administration of Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy 2020

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to submit three additional year-end questions that I would have submitted at the spring sitting.

Mr. Speaker, the first written question is for the Minister of Finance and the subject is the administration of the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy.

Mr. Speaker, over the last two years I have submitted detailed questions on the administration and utilization of the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy. The results have indicated that there was disparity among the distribution of staff housing where employees in higher salary positions, such as professionals and middle and upper management, had 54 percent of all employees receiving the staff housing subsidy, meanwhile the lower salary positions, such as paraprofessionals and administrative, those who are in greater need of this subsidy only have 28 percent of employees in staff housing.

Mr. Speaker, the more alarming fact is the low ratio of Inuit employees in staff housing has actually gotten lower. The response to my 2018 question identified that a mere 409 Inuit employees received the staff housing benefit. The response to my 2019 question indicated that the Inuit participation rate had reduced to 380... .

>>*Instrumental music disrupting the proceedings at 15:11*

>>*House resumed at 15:40*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I wish to advise our viewing audience that we took a break and we have resumed. (interpretation ends) Written Questions. Mr. Lightstone.

An Hon. Member: A point of order.

Speaker: A point of order has been called. Minister Hickes, your point of order and as to what rule has been breached.

Point of Order

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like the Speaker to rule the written question out of order as it's directed to the Minister of Finance, who does not have authority over staff housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) At this time I cannot rule on the point of order because I haven't heard what the question was and because of that, we will proceed with Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will start again. Mr. Speaker, my written question is for the Minister of Finance and the subject is the administration of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy for the 2020 fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, over the last two years I have submitted detailed questions on the administration and utilization of the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy. The results have indicated that there was a disparity... .

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) As I stated earlier, I didn't hear any question as yet and I cannot rule on the point of order at this time. Can you proceed, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the third time. Mr. Speaker, over the last two years I have submitted detailed questions on the administration and utilization of the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy, including last year's question to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Speaker, the results have indicated that there was a disparity among the distribution of staff housing where employees in higher salary positions, such as professionals and middle and upper management, had approximately 54 percent of all employees receiving the staff housing subsidy, while the lower salary positions, such as paraprofessionals and administrative, those who are actually in greater need of this subsidy only have 28 percent of those employees in staff housing.

Mr. Speaker, the alarming fact is the low ratio of Inuit employees in staff housing has actually gotten lower. The response to my 2018 question identified that a mere 409 Inuit employees received the staff housing benefit. The response to my 2019 question indicated that the Inuit participation rate had reduced to 380 employees. However, I do remain optimistic that the new Staff Housing Policy will balance these inequities.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are quite detailed and I ask that they be entered into the *Hansard* as read. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Written Questions. (interpretation) While we're under this item, (interpretation ends) the member is requesting that his written question be entered into the record as read. Do members agree?

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Nay.

Some Hon. Members: Nay.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The rules are silent on this matter, so I will now use my

discretion and apply Rule 62(2) to this. I have heard two or more nays and therefore I will be requesting the member to please read your question. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I get into my question, I would just like to add that it is our role and responsibility as regular members to hold this government accountable and ensure that transparency remains at all levels. Mr. Speaker, it is our responsibility to do so and it is done mainly through oral questions, but when it comes time to detailed questions is when written questions are utilized.

Now, in the interest of saving time for everyone in this room, I ask that the detailed questions be entered into the *Hansard* as read. This is the second time which my request has been nay'd and that I'll state the exact same thing that I stated the last time. It's my role to do so and I intend on continuing to do so. Mr. Speaker, if I must read my written question word for word, I have no trouble in doing so.

Question 1: as of March 31, broken down by community, employing entity, and category of position, how many staff housing units were rented to employees who are Nunavut Inuit?

Question 2 is similar, requesting information on non-Nunavut Inuit.

Mr. Speaker, question 3 is similar to questions 1 and 2 but is requesting information on contract employees in staff housing.

Mr. Speaker, question 4, as of March 31, 2020, how many employees under the

jurisdiction of the Government of Nunavut's Senior Personnel Secretariat were renting staff housing units and how many of those employees were Nunavut Inuit and again, how many were non-Inuit?

As of March 31, 2020, broken down by size of unit, what is the average monthly lease?

Question 6: as of March 31, 2020, broken down by size of unit, what was the average monthly rent deducted for employees renting these staff housing units to determine the actual subsidy?

Question 7: as of March 31, 2020, what was the average monthly value of the staff housing subsidy?

Question 8: as of March 31, 2020, broken down by community, how many individuals were on the Nunavut Housing Corporation's wait-list?

Question 9: as of March 31, what was the average length of time for an individual to remain on the staff housing wait-list?

That concludes my first written question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Written Questions. (interpretation) Wait a moment, please.

Thank you. I apologize for having you wait. I have this statement to make. (interpretation ends) While the written question is in order, it may be directed to the wrong minister, which can be resolved after this sitting day ends. Do all understand this?

Item 7. (interpretation ends) Written Questions. Mr. Lightstone.

**Written Question 072 – 5(2):
Administration of Government of
Nunavut's Staff Housing 2020**

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I previously indicated, I had three year-end written questions that I normally would have submitted during the spring sitting, so I am doing so today.

My next question is for the Minister responsible for Nunavut Housing Corporation and it is also related to the administration of the Government of Nunavut's staff housing.

Mr. Speaker, I previously submitted written questions on the administration of the Government of Nunavut's staff housing, of which I would like to seek updated information.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are detailed and I request that they be entered into the *Hansard* as read.

Purpose:

I have previously submitted written questions on the administration of the Government of Nunavut's staff housing, of which I would like to seek updated information.

1. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community and size of unit (bachelor unit, one-bedroom unit, two-bedroom unit, three-bedroom unit, and four-plus bedroom unit), how many staff housing units were maintained by the Nunavut Housing Corporation?

2. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community and size of unit (bachelor unit, one-bedroom unit, two-bedroom unit, three-bedroom unit, and four-plus bedroom unit), how many staff housing units were vacant?

lease payments for the 2018-19 fiscal year.
3. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community and size of unit (bachelor unit, one-bedroom unit, two-bedroom unit, three-bedroom unit, and four-plus bedroom unit), how many staff housing units were occupied?
4. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community and size of unit (within the meaning of Schedule E of the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy), how many of the staff housing units referred to in Question 1 were owned by the Nunavut Housing Corporation?
5. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community and size of unit (within the meaning of Schedule E of the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy), how many of the staff housing units referred to in Question 1 were leased by the Nunavut Housing Corporation?
6. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community and size of unit (within the meaning of Schedule E of the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy), from which entities were the units referred to in Question 3 leased? For each entity identified, please provide the total value of
7. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by size of unit (within the meaning of Schedule E of the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy), what was the average monthly lease?

(Given that the NHC deflected some questions to the Department of Finance, this question will be posed to both the NHC and Finance, who can determine who is best able to respond.)
8. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by size of unit (within the meaning of Schedule E of the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy), what was the average monthly rent deducted from employees renting staff housing units?

(Given that the NHC deflected some questions to the Department of Finance, this question will be posed to both the NHC and Finance, who can determine who is best able to respond.)
9. As of March 31, 2020, what was the average monthly value of the staff housing subsidy provided to employees renting staff housing units?

(Given that the NHC deflected some questions to the Department of Finance, this question will be posed to both the NHC and Finance, who can determine who is best able to respond.)

10. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community and employing entity (Government of Nunavut department, Crown agency, and territorial corporation), within the meaning of the “Sponsoring” provision that is provided for in Schedule A of the Government of Nunavut’s Staff Housing Policy, how many contract employees of the Government of Nunavut were residing in staff housing units?

- a. How much is each employing entity paying for housing non-GN employees?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The member is requesting that his written questions be entered into the record as read. Do members agree?

An Hon. Member: No.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I only heard one nay, so the written question will be entered into the record as read.

Written Questions. Mr. Lightstone.

**Written Question 073 – 5(2):
Administration of QEC’s Staff
Housing 2020**

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My last year-end question of the day is for the Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation and the subject is the administration of QEC staff housing.

Mr. Speaker, as I previously indicated, I am concerned over the lack of Inuit participation in the QEC’s staff housing program. To my disappointment, the response to my previous written question indicated that Inuit participation in the QEC’s staff housing was at 27 percent, which is much lower than the Inuit employment, which is at 51 percent for the same time period.

Mr. Speaker, I remain optimistic and hope to see improved figures with the QEC’s next response. Again, my questions are detailed and I request that they be entered into the *Hansard* as read.

Purpose:

As I have previously indicated, I am concerned over the lack of Inuit participation in the QEC’s staff housing program. To my disappointment, the response to my previous written question is Inuit participation in the QEC’s staff housing was at 27 percent, which is much lower than the Inuit employment, which is 51 percent for the same time period. I hope to see improved figures with the Qulliq Energy Corporation’s next response.

1. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community and size of unit (bachelor unit, one-bedroom unit, two-bedroom unit, three-bedroom unit, and four-plus bedroom unit), how many staff housing units were maintained by the Qulliq Energy Corporation?
2. How many of the units referred to in Question 1 are reserved for transient use?

3. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community and size of unit (bachelor unit, one-bedroom unit, two-bedroom unit, three-bedroom unit, and four-plus bedroom unit), how many staff housing units maintained by the Qulliq Energy Corporation were vacant?
4. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community and size of unit (bachelor unit, one-bedroom unit, two-bedroom unit, three-bedroom unit, and four-plus bedroom unit), how many staff housing units maintained by the Qulliq Energy Corporation were not vacant?
5. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community, and category of position (executive, senior management, middle management, professional, paraprofessional, administrative support), how many staff housing units were rented to employees who were Nunavut Inuit?
6. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community, and category of position (executive, senior management, middle management, professional, paraprofessional, administrative support), how many staff housing units were rented to employees who were not Nunavut Inuit?
7. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community and size of unit (bachelor unit, one-bedroom unit, two-bedroom unit, three-bedroom unit, and four-plus bedroom unit), how many of the staff housing units referred to in Question 1 were owned by the Qulliq Energy Corporation?
8. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community and size of unit (bachelor unit, one-bedroom unit, two-bedroom unit, three-bedroom unit, and four-plus bedroom unit), how many of the staff housing units referred to in Question 1 were leased by the Qulliq Energy Corporation?
9. As of March 31, 2020, what was the average monthly value of the staff housing subsidy provided to employees renting staff housing units?
10. As of March 31, 2020, broken down by community, how many individuals were on the staff housing waiting list?
11. In a previous response, the QEC had indicated that there were zero employees on the waitlist. Does the QEC have an application process for employees who wish to participate in the staff housing program?
12. In a previous response, the QEC had indicated that there is not a rental assistance program similar to that offered by the Government of Nunavut Staff Housing Policy to ensure lower income employees in staff housing are charged affordable rent. Why is that?
13. In a previous response, the QEC had indicated that the corporation encourages homeownership by providing a household allowance to employees that are not in staff

- housing. As of March 31, 2020, how many employees receive this benefit?
14. In the 2018-19 Annual Report of the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Note 13 – other income, identifies housing recoveries of employees to be \$1,481,000. What was the total cost associated with the Qulliq Energy Corporation’s staff housing in the 2018-19 fiscal year?
15. The Nunavut Housing Corporation Schedule B, consolidated schedule of expense by type, provides detailed expenditures by type for the staff housing program. Can the Qulliq Energy Corporation provide the same level of detail for the cost of the staff housing program for the 2018-19 fiscal year?
16. As the corporation’s staff housing program is essential to program delivery, as well as the fact that the costly program represents 4 percent of total expenditures in 2017-18, why are the costs not disclosed into the financial statements?
17. In the Qulliq Energy Corporation annual contracting, procurement and leasing activity report, Appendix 5 Leases identifies the landlord of each leased property. Will the Qulliq Energy Corporation identify the actual owner of each property that is leased in the 2018-19 fiscal year and going forward?
18. In the Qulliq Energy Corporation annual contracting, procurement and leasing activity report, Appendix 5 Leases identifies the landlord of each leased property. What procedures does the Qulliq Energy Corporation have in place to identify the actual owner of each property that is leased?
19. Does the Qulliq Energy Corporation currently lease staff housing units from Qulliq Energy Corporation employees?
- Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
- Speaker** (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The member is requesting that his written question be entered into the record as read. Do members agree?
- Some Members:** Agreed.
- Speaker** (interpretation): There is agreement so the written question will be entered into the record as read. (interpretation) Thank you.
- (interpretation ends) Written Questions. (interpretation) There are no more. (interpretation ends) Returns to Written Questions. Replies to Opening Address. (interpretation) Item 10. Petitions. (interpretation ends) No. 11. (interpretation) Responses to Petitions. No. 12. (interpretation ends) Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.
- Item 12: Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters**

**Committee Report 026 – 5(2): Bill 44,
Write-off of Assets and Debts Act,
2019-2020**

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I wish to report that Bill 44, *Write-off of Assets and Debts Act, 2019-2020*, has been reviewed by the Standing Committee on Legislation and that the bill is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Bill 44 will be placed on the order paper for Monday, September 28.

(interpretation ends) Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

**Committee Report 027 – 5(2): Bill 48,
Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2020-
2021**

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report that Bill 48, *Forgiveness of Debts Act, 2020-2021*, has been reviewed by the Standing Committee on Legislation and that the bill is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Bill 48 will be placed on the order paper for Monday, September 28.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Member Main.

**Committee Report 028 – 5(2): Bill 50,
An Act to Amend the Liquor Act**

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I wish to report that Bill 50, *An Act to Amend the Liquor Act*, has been reviewed by the Standing Committee on Legislation and that the bill is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Bill 50 will be placed on the order paper for Monday, September 28.

Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. (interpretation) I have no more names on my list. No. 13. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. Mr. Lightstone.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

**Tabled Document 291 – 5(2):
Correspondence Concerning
Clare’s Law**

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you know, I have been advocating for the introduction of a Clare’s Law for Nunavut. This initiative would be of significant benefit of protecting vulnerable Nunavummiut from the threat of domestic violence and possibly child sexual abuse.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table my recent exchanges of correspondence with the federal and territorial ministers on the important issue, which I encourage all members to review with care. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. (interpretation) Let's proceed. No. 14. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Item 14: Notices of Motions

Motion 084 – 5(2): Extended Adjournment – Notice

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I give notice that on Monday, September 28, 2020, I will move the following motion:

I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Rankin Inlet South, that pursuant to the provisions of Rule 3, that when the House concludes its present sitting, it shall be adjourned until October 21, 2020.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will seek unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Motion 085 – 5(2): Support for Students during COVID-19 Pandemic – Notice

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, September 28, 2020, I will move the following motion:

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, that the Government of

Nunavut explore options, in partnership with such entities as Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, for providing meaningful employment and training opportunities for high school graduates and post-secondary students who have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions. (interpretation) Let's proceed. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. (interpretation) No. 16. (interpretation ends) Motions. *Nuuttigiarutiit*. (interpretation) Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Item 16: Motions

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if I'll get approval, but at this time I'm asking for unanimous consent to deal with my motion today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The member is seeking unanimous consent to deal with his motion today. Are there any nays? (interpretation) There are none. Please proceed, Mr. Main.

Motion 084 – 5(2): Extended Adjournment

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, my colleagues, for being completely silent.

>>*Laughter*

(interpretation ends) I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Rankin Inlet

South, that pursuant to the provisions Rule 3, that when the House concludes its present sitting, it shall be adjourned until October 21, 2020.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. To the motion.

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

Speaker (interpretation): All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Motions. Let's proceed. No. 17. (interpretation ends) First Reading of Bills. (interpretation) No. 18. (interpretation ends) Second Reading of Bills. (interpretation) No. 19. (interpretation ends) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 45, 46, and 47 and Tabled Document 65 – 5(2) with Mr. Rumbolt in the Chair.

Before we proceed to the Committee of the Whole, we will take a 10-minute break. Just to remind everybody that the 10 minutes will be just to organize the Chamber for Committee of the Whole.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 16:03 and Committee resumed at 16:16*

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

Chairman (Mr. Rumbolt): Good afternoon, members. I would like to call the committee meeting to order.

In Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bills 45, 46, and 47 and Tabled Document 65 – 5(2). What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to do the clause-by-clause review of Bill 47, as reprinted, and then commence with the review of the two remaining supplementary appropriation bills, starting with Bill 45, followed by Bill 46. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 47, as reprinted, followed by the review of Bill 45?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 47 – Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2020-2021 – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Thank you. I would now like to ask Minister Hickes: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Does the committee agree for the witnesses to appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. For the record, Minister Hickes, if you could please introduce your witnesses.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Deputy Minister of Finance,

Jeff Chown; Deputy Minister of Health, Ruby Brown; Deputy Minister of Justice, Stephen Mansell; and Director of Corporate Services, Department of Health, Greg Babstock. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes, and welcome. I ask members to go to Bill 47 in your legislative binder.

Thank you. We're on Bill 47, reprint, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2020-2021*. Clause 1. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 3. Go to Schedule on page 3. Schedule. Vote 2: Capital. Total Supplementary Appropriation. \$146,026,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Clause 3. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 4. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 5. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 6. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 7. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 8. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree to Bill 47 as reprinted?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree to place Bill 47 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. We will now move on to Bill 45. Thank you. Minister Hickes, if you could proceed with your opening comments on Bill 45, please. Minister Hickes.

**Bill 45 – Supplementary
Appropriation (Operations &
Maintenance) Act, No. 4, 2019-
2020 – Consideration in
Committee**

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. I am here to provide an overview of Bill 45, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 4, 2019-2020*. Through this bill we seek to increase the Department of Justice's operations and maintenance appropriation by \$5.25 million in 2019-2020. This increases the department's overall program budget for last year by 4 percent to \$133.8 million.

Two cost components drive the need for this increase. We identified and

confirmed these amounts as part of the year-end reporting processes.

First, the department requires \$3 million to fund cost overruns with the RCMP related to frontline operations, equipment maintenance, and some administrative compensation and benefits costs.

Second, the department requires \$2.25 million to address budget shortfalls in the Corrections Branch. Here the drivers continue to be human resource and other operational requirements of Nunavut's seven correctional facilities.

Mr. Chairman and members, this completes my comments I'll be pleased to take any questions about this bill. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Are there any general comments? Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am just curious; I know First Nations policing divisions are funded by the Government of Canada. For Nunavut, why don't we have an Inuit police force under the same funding? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. We were at general comments, but I'll allow the question. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am sure that Mr. Mansell will supplement my response, but I have been involved in this through my role as Minister of Finance and I have spoken directly and personally to Minister Blair.

My apologies; sorry, I had a little brain freeze there for a second, Mr. Chairman, on talking of that exact topic.

I know it has been a topic that has been ongoing for years from the Department of Justice. I can tell all of the committee members that this has been a priority. I know for myself, I think it's unrealistic to expect Nunavut as a jurisdiction to continue to pay 70 percent of RCMP costs when other jurisdictions with the similar aboriginal populations only pay, I believe, 30 percent of the costs.

Through you, Mr. Chairman, if Mr. Mansell can give an update on where we are at that stage. I think it is an important topic. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The minister summarized the issue quite well. The First Nations Policing Program is a federal program that funds a greater proportion of policing costs than we do have with our contract with the RCMP. The minister is also correct that a number of the communities that are funded by this very important program have many of the same issues that we face in Nunavut and similar challenges that we face.

The Department of Justice, through previous ministers, through our current minister, at the officials' level, has been advocating that Nunavut be included in the First Nations Policing Program funding for probably a decade now. We continue to do that. The minister most recently sent a letter to her counterpart, I think, in March, and we intend to have a

meeting on policing in Nunavut this winter, again, where we will be raising this issue.

I noted this afternoon that the Prime Minister raised this program in beefing up First Nations policing in the Throne Speech today, and we think possibly this might be an opening again for us to raise the issue, and we continue to advocate for Nunavut to receive this very important funding so we can beef up our community policing and improve community safety for Nunavummiut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. Opening comments? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just very briefly, I'm concerned about the root causes that are driving some of these increased costs on the policing side. The briefing material that has been provided highlights the continued increase in service calls to the RCMP as well as extraordinary incidents. I just wanted to comment that anything we can do as a government to change that trend and to reduce severity and amount of calls for police intervention the better. I think it's so that we don't end up in situations like this in the future. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. General comments? If not, we will move on. I'll ask members to go to Bill 45 on page 4. Department of Justice. Not Previously Authorized. Are there any questions? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) First on the law enforcement side, Mr. Mansell and the minister mentioned this First Nations Policing Program. I'm not that aware of the details of that program. The costs of policing in Nunavut are currently split 70-30, with 70 percent falling to the GN. Under that First Nations program, what is the split? I realize, Mr. Chairman, that this may be a bit outside the scope of the bill, but I'm not intending to go too further down this line. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickers.

Hon. George Hickers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In eligible jurisdictions the roles are reversed, 70-30 the other way. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickers. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Where it mentions here the extraordinary incidents, it mentions in the briefing material, "An extraordinary incident is an emergency beyond regular duties which require the mobilization of significant resources," and it mentions 49 incidents during 2019-2020. Is there an average cost for an extraordinary incident and how does the accounting or billing side of that work? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickers.

Hon. George Hickers: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't have that level of

detail. Through you, Mr. Chairman, if Mr. Mansell could respond to that question.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I don't have an average cost per incident, but I can tell you that depending on the amount of mobilization, whether or not backup is needed from Iqaluit or a regional centre, these incidents can cost in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. The "V" division has operational jurisdiction there, so they decide the resources that are needed to respond to the incident and then the bill comes to the GN for 70 percent of those costs. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you. Still on the law enforcement topic, it mentions overtime travel and administrative expenses related to increased costs of policing. We have heard about issues around post-traumatic stress for officers who have been posted in the north or mental health issues or burnout. Are these types of issues factoring into these increased costs on law enforcement? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is another issue that I brought up with the minister...oh, sorry, my apologies. I brought it up with the superintendent of the RCMP when they

were here during the command change a couple of years ago for Ms. Jones. One of the issues or concerns that I have had and raised is that when somebody from the RCMP does go on long-term disability, we are still continuing to pay for that in addition to paying for the replacement officer. Most notably, statistically in 2012-13 there was an average of one and one-quarter members off. The latest information from 2019-2020 was just over 11 members off, so it is quite a substantial increase. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister. The average of 11 officers off on disability or leave, I'm surprised that Nunavut is required to pay for those. Is there no benefit plan that would cover them as a part of a national police force or is this the case for every jurisdiction that has RCMP officers where the jurisdiction is required to pay the disability or what have you; expenses? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was the question that I posed at the time as well, and maybe there has been an update since that conversation I had. Through you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Mansell may have further details. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) My understanding is that the jurisdiction where the trauma occurred which resulted in the officer needing to take the leave is the jurisdiction that pays those costs until that officer is able to be reassigned and able to go back to work.

With respect to insurance, the RCMP is a self-insuring organization and part of that is because of the risk factor in the job. It would be very difficult for them to find sort of a private insurer and so we do cover those costs. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I just have one final question on the law enforcement topic. Has the department been given any assurance that things are progressing on the Inuit and local employment front? There has been, I know, some initiative shown and it's encouraging. It's in the very early stages, but has the department been assured that things are moving forward in that regard to get more Inuit working as police? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not up to date on the current status of Inuit employment goals for the RCMP, but I'm sure Mr. Mansell is. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The department fully agrees that Inuit employment is vital to the "V" division. It is in the shared directional statement agreed to with our minister and the commanding officer. We do have assurance from the "V" division that they are working on it.

Some of the things they are working on; the indigenous pre-cadet experience program is a national program that we sent Nunavummiut to. The Assisted Applicant Training Program, which is a joint program between the "V" division and NTL, actually, is designed to help Inuit go through the recruitment process. As well, the RCMP has had many job fairs and recruitment drives and that sort of thing.

However, we fully agree that we do need more Inuit officers and as a department, we continue to share with our contract partner, the RCMP, how important this issue is. We need police officers that are from the community that can speak the language, understand the culture, and the RCMP agree with us, and we are going to continue to work on this as a priority. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. Just for the benefit of the members, I am accepting questions on both items; law enforcement and corrections. Mr. Main, continue.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I will move to the corrections issue. Thank you.

I just have one question at this point. I recognize the department took some extraordinary measures to deal with the threat of COVID-19 at the different correctional facilities in Nunavut. I would just like to get a feel for how important it is in terms of correctional facilities and the conditions within, and the threat of COVID-19, how important is it, especially when you look at other correctional facilities across Canada, to address that threat within our system? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think it is widely recognized that any group of people living in a communal living setting such as a long-term care facility, a correctional facility, or anything of that nature, there are increased risks, especially with visitation and making sure that the hygiene is practised, but as far as specific endeavours, I am sure Mr. Mansell would have more details. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The member is very correct. We did take some extraordinary measures in order to ensure that we were prepared for the instance that there may be COVID-19 in a facility, but also to do our very best to keep it out. We set up screening points at the front of all our facilities. Even continuing on today, if you want to go into a correctional facility, you have to answer a number of questions, take your

temperature, wash your hands, and that sort of thing.

As the members know, we isolated number of our staff at the onset. This was not because of a COVID case or anything. It was a precaution to ensure that we had a staff contingent that was not at any risk of COVID, and we have taken a lot of measures with respect to cleaning and contingency planning. The minister is right that a pandemic like COVID-19 getting into a correctional facility is the worst case scenario in the corrections profession. It can be devastating. We have seen this in some cases, unfortunately, in the United States. In Canada we have been luckier and in Nunavut, I think, thanks to a lot of planning and a lot of work by our corrections officials. We have planned and we have not had COVID in our facility, but we have done a lot to ensure it stays out and ensure that we are prepared if there were cases. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of measures that have been taken to deal with COVID-19, are individuals who have been exempted from the 14-day isolation requirement permitted to work in correctional facilities in Nunavut? I will use for example the health facilities. We know that is permitted and that has been justified. Is it also being done in the correctional facilities? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mansell and I kind of shared a look, and we can't think of examples where that has occurred. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just want a clarification. In the briefing notes I read \$2.0 million in the Corrections Branch, and I believe there is Corrections Canada. Do they also fund 70-30 for Corrections Canada; 70 for Nunavut? I need a clarification. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for the question from the member. It is a different situation where Corrections Canada is responsible for federal corrections facilities. Each jurisdiction has their own, so where somebody would get a federal sentence, they would go to a federal facility, where they would take our individual or individuals and then we would get billed for that, if I am not mistaken. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think Mr. Mansell would like to supplement my response, please, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. I wish they would take 70 percent, that would be

great, but the way that it is split is that it depends on the sentence. If the sentence is longer than two years, then the inmate is a federal responsibility and they pay all the costs. If the sentence is less than two years, then they are Nunavut's responsibility and we pay all the costs. That is how the split works. Two years and more, you go to a federal penitentiary; less than two years, you go to a Nunavut jail. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for that response. My other question is with regard to law enforcement; RCMP. In the briefing note I am being advised that the current deficit is in excess of \$2.8 million, provided by funds under the RCMP accommodation program. The intent of these funds was to build housing units in communities where RCMP is experiencing a shortage. Does that tell me that the Nunavut government was able to provide 70 percent of this program? I am seeing a lot of RCMP housing in my mind, unfinished and incomplete because Public Safety Canada was unable to approve its 30 percent share of this program, but what is the situation here? Can we carry over the housing funding to the new year coming? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are some finance regulations and rules around not being able to carry that over, but I know Mr. Mansell is well briefed on this issue, so I

am sure he can respond with more detail than I can.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickey. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for the question. The tricky part with respect to capital money that we give to the RCMP is that it's part of the RCMP contract. For the Department of Justice, it is an O&M dollar, and for the RCMP, it is a capital dollar.

In this case what happened was there was an identified need for more housing for the RCMP and they intended to build it. The \$2.8 million was provided to them as our part of the accommodation building program. Public Safety Canada did not come up with the 30 percent on their end, so the program did not go forward. What that meant then was that the RCMP continued to have the deficit and then therefore a request was made to apply the \$2.8 million to their deficit. That is not ideal and it is not something that we intended to do, but it seemed to make sense because the deficit was there and the funding was there.

Going forward, my corporate services division is taking steps to be able to do what is called "fence off" those types of capital dollars. That will allow us to carry forward those types of dollars so this type of situation will not happen again. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I only have a couple of questions. In the briefing note on page 5 it says that part of the deficit is because of overtime, travel, and expenses related to increased costs of policing. Right below that it states that a number of increased calls to the "V" division, 2019-2020, has increased from 27,000 to over 30,000 calls during 2019.

I would like some clarification. I know it's not very good to see the increase going up. I am curious to know if this has a lot to do with alcohol-related, mental health, or at the time there could have been mistreatment from RCMP members, or missing and murdered. The times we are facing, I'm curious to know what is causing the increase. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you Ms. Nakashuk. Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Mansell would be better suited to respond to the member. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The member has named some of the driving factors to crime and to call to the RCMP in Nunavut, which is alcohol, addictions, mental health issues, trauma, legacy of abuse, and these types of things. We have seen an increase ongoing for the last number of years in calls to the RCMP, and part of addressing this issue is getting to the bottom of some of these issues that we are talking about and it's a challenge.

Our department has a crime prevention section which is working on implementing a crime prevention strategy and working on some programming in the communities, but we need to work with our partners in Health, in Family Services, and in the RCMP to get to the root causes of some of these issues that we are discussing that are definitely driving the increase in call rates in Nunavut. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As one of my colleagues mentioned too, there are serious incidents that are brought forward as well. I'm curious to know what the statistics are right now. I know we're still in this 2020-21 fiscal year, but are the numbers still about the same, or is there an increase still or is there a decrease to it? I know there are no solid answers to it, but I am curious to know where we're going in this. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Nakashuk. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, Mr. Mansell may be best suited to respond to that question. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Mansell, go ahead.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I think I can say I don't have the sort of up-to-today call volumes, but I can say that this summer has been very busy for

the RCMP across Nunavut. A lot of that can be attributed, unfortunately, to CERB and people having access to funds that they might not have been in the past.

I imagine that our call numbers at the end of this fiscal year will be the same or possibly more. As I say, the numbers are busy in the territory and our RCMP officers work very hard to tackle these high call volumes and provide professional service to Nunavummiut and we hope to work on some of these issues to possibly reduce... . A year-to-date comparison, 2019, 20,668; 2020, 22,712, so the numbers do continue to rise. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. Ms. Nakashuk.

Ms. Nakashuk (interpretation): Looking at these numbers that are just rising, are you going to be setting aside any more money to reduce it? It seems like you're going to be just expecting higher numbers in the future. Before we get to those higher numbers, the last question I would like to ask is that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, Mr. Mansell would probably be best suited to respond to that through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell: If I understood the question correctly, the member was wondering if we're going to be providing more funding to crime prevention and to reduce the call volumes. We do currently have a budget for crime prevention. We don't have an

“ask” at the moment to increase that budget. Our budget asks have been focused on these two items here that are deficits at RCMP and corrections. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Mansell. Ms. Nakashuk, you’re done? Okay. Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Nakashuk touched on what I wanted to bring up about proactive measures. Crime has always been there and I assume you guys have a benchmark or something to follow up on or improve on so that we’re not sitting here a year from now with a request for another \$5 million. Is there an actual plan in place so that we’re not doing this a year from now? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Hickeys.

Hon. George Hickeys: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to departmental activity, Mr. Mansell would be much better suited to respond to the detail of that question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The department does have a crime prevention strategy which we are implementing, but as I stated earlier, addressing the drivers of calls to the RCMP and criminal complaints in Nunavut is not something that one department can tackle. These are health issues, mental health issues, addictions issues, and while we are working on crime prevention in our department, we

do need to work with our partners in those other fields as well to tackle some of these systemic issues that we need to work on in order to address this issue. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First I’ll start off with the funds that were used to offset the RCMP’s deficit; the funds that we approved, I believe, two years ago to construct these additional staff housing units for the RCMP. I believe this is the first time that I recall seeing the RCMP requesting additional O&M funding. Would the minister be able to elaborate on that? Is this the first or, if not, when was the last time the RCMP came forward with additional operational funds? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Hickeys.

Hon. George Hickeys: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know from a finance standpoint it seems...how do I put this? Basically if those funds would, as they did, go unspent, they could have theoretically been returned to the department, but then they had a deficit, so they would have had to then turn around and request the money back. From what I understand, it was just used to offset the deficit.

Again, the way the contracts are worded right now, as Mr. Mansell mentioned earlier, there is no way to carry over. Now they are working on a solution to that so that if this were to happen again, that money could be carried over until

Public Safety Canada came on board for the project.

I don't know if I covered everything. Mr. Mansell, if you want to supplement, through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickeys. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell: I think the member was also asking if this was the first time the RCMP had come for additional supplementary funding. Is that correct? As the member knows, I have been in the DM role for not too long, but my understanding is that it has been actually quite a regular occurrence. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the responses. Moving on, in relation to that \$2.8 million that was approved previously for the RCMP accommodation program, which Public Safety Canada was unable to provide their contribution, we had also recently approved special funds for the RCMP to replace, I believe, radio equipment. My next question is: is that radio replacement project also at risk of losing federal funding? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Hickeys.

Hon. George Hickeys: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That wasn't part of my briefing on this topic, so Mr. Mansell would probably be best to respond to that one.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In anticipation for this discussion, I recently had thorough briefing from the RCMP on the radio project. The project is moving forward and is fully funded by both parties. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Moving on to another topic previously discussed, has there been any discussions with NTI about using recently announced funding flowing to NTI to assist RCMP in attending calls with mental health specialists? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Hickeys.

Hon. George Hickeys: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I haven't been in touch with NTI regarding the announcement I read in the paper a couple of weeks ago on the mental health money that they are provided through ITK, but Mr. Mansell may be aware of some discussions along those lines. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Mansell.

Mr. Mansell (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) NTI and the RCMP are working together on the pre-application program, which we very much support. There have been some very early discussions about providing further support to the RCMP with respect to mental health calls and that sort of thing. We haven't reached out to NTI on the issue, but it is an interesting proposal and it is definitely something we can think about. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. I have no more names on my list for questions. We are on Justice. Not Previously Authorized. \$5,250,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Go back to page 2. Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) No. 4, 2019-2020. Schedule 1. Operations and Maintenance Appropriation. \$5,250,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. I'll now ask members to go to Bill 45 in your legislative binder.

Thank you. We're on Bill 45, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 4, 2019-2020*. Clause 1. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 3. Go to Schedule on page 3. Schedule. Vote 1: Operations and Maintenance. Total Supplementary Appropriation. No, I'm sorry. Did I read the wrong page? Sorry. I'll do this again. Schedule. Vote 1: Operations and Maintenance. Total Supplementary Appropriation. \$5,250,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Clause 3. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 4. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 5. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 6. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 7. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to Bill 45 as a whole?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Do members agree to put Bill 45 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Hickes, closing comments, please.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the questions. I think there was some really good dialogue on a few issues and I know all the people are listening to how it's always a concern how these two line items keep seeming to come back and in having to do supplementary appropriations.

I really encourage Public Safety Canada to help get engaged a little bit more in our policing of Nunavut along with the RCMP.

I again just want to thank the members for their questions. There was some good dialogue here today. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Hickee. On behalf of the committee, I thank you and your staff for being here to answer the questions.

With that, we are going to move on to Bill 46, if the minister is ready, and he can go on into his opening comments, please. Minister Hickee.

**Bill 46 – Supplementary
Appropriation (Operations &
Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2020-
2021 – Consideration in
Committee**

Hon. George Hickee: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members. I am here to provide an overview of Bill 46, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2020-2021*.

Through this bill we seek to increase the Government of Nunavut's operations and maintenance appropriation by \$52.1 million in 2020-21. If approved, this will increase program spending authority by about 2.9 percent to almost \$1,869,000,000.

As members know, Canada, like much of the rest of the world, began to experience the impacts of COVID-19 in mid-March. Since then, governments, families, communities, and businesses around the globe have taken considerable steps to slow the spread of the virus, often at great social, personal and economic cost.

Thankfully Nunavut has avoided much of the pandemic's direct impact so far, but not without costs of our own. As part of our work to protect Nunavummiut and our communities, our government has made several decisions that required additional spending, like helping lunch programs continue following school closures, maintaining air service to our communities, and enforcing isolation requirements.

Normally departments require Assembly approval before taking on new costs. In certain circumstances, however, we can use special warrants to authorize new spending. Specifically special warrants provide an interim appropriation when spending is urgently required and when the Assembly is not sitting.

Our government has issued ten special warrants so far this year. Two of these relate to capital spending, which I addressed separately through Bill 47. Together the remaining eight warrants authorize departments to incur an extra \$42 million of new COVID-related spending. I am submitting these expenditures to the Assembly through Bill 46 today.

Fortunately the Government of Nunavut has also received significant funding from the Government of Canada in support of COVID-related expenses. We have been able to use this federal funding to offset some of our territorial expenses. As a result of this outside support, we can reduce the amount of new territorial funding we require by \$10.1 million.

The net increase to the Government of Nunavut's expenditures is \$52.1 million. This is what this bill adds to our overall

2020-21 operations and maintenance appropriation.

I appreciate there are many moving parts to this bill, especially given the interactions between special warrants and federal funding. I have tried to keep members of this committee informed along the way through the letters I have sent to you in April, June, and August. For your convenience, my letter in mid-August provided you a “sneak peek” at the details of this bill. I trust you have had an opportunity to review this letter in detail. Since then we have identified the need to seek more funding to extend the operation of the isolation hubs until the end of December.

As a quick summary for members, this bill seeks:

- \$20,783,000 for the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. This is made up of \$26.8 million in spending already approved by special warrant, but reduced by \$6 million in federal funding.
- \$0 for the Department of Finance. This includes \$4.1 million authorized by special warrant for the wage premium program we launched in June 2020, but reduces the overall appropriation by the same amount to recognize the federal funding we received afterwards.
- \$31.3 million for the Department of Health to fund the territory’s costs of isolating travellers and managing the isolation hubs themselves. Of this, we have already authorized \$11.1 million by special warrant to cover the operations of hubs until October. We are now seeking an additional

\$20.2 million to provide authority to continue hub operations from October to the end of December, if needed.

Mr. Chairman and members, this completes my comments and I would be pleased to take any questions about this bill. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Are there any general comments? Ms. Towntongie.

Ms. Towntongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Looking at this, the government has issued 10 special warrants so far this year, but none of us, neither the federal government nor the Government of Nunavut, know when COVID-19 will end. Looking at the south, there is a second wave occurring and we don’t have an idea when COVID-19 will end. Just an estimate or a guesstimate, should we expect another 10 special warrants for the next year or until COVID-19 ends? I am thinking about this because that is a high cost to addressing COVID-19 related spending. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Towntongie. Again, you asked a question, and we are on general comments. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Admittedly we do not know how long this is going to last. Depending upon the timing of things, hopefully we can go through the normal appropriation process in the House without having to use special warrants, but if necessary and forced to, then we would. We do have the fall sitting coming up and then the winter sitting where hopefully we would be able to address any future

expenses related to COVID-19 in the House here and debate it appropriately. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. General comments? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In looking at the warrants, our government experienced an unusual time this year and staff has undergone tremendous change, so first of all, we should voice our appreciation and thanks to our employees within the Government of Nunavut, along with the responsible minister, as they have worked under duress providing tremendous services to Nunavummiut, obviously.

Mr. Chairman, I am deeply concerned about the extravagant amounts of funds we are directing to southern coffers, particularly to airline companies, and the isolation hubs located in the southern cities where they must follow protocols. This has contributed in the enormous expenditures our government is paying as this is noticeable. The funds that would be better off for use on our limited infrastructure have been diverted.

Nonetheless, it behooves us to imagine what a human life is worth and how much each life costs to save in terms of these expenditures. This pandemic may result in the loss of life and we have to balance how much funding to set aside in order to save more lives, and in looking at our fellow Nunavut residents, we have to prioritize them in this regard. Although it may land this government into funding difficulties, yes, money is not equitable to a human life, and it can always be replaced.

Furthermore, my constituents are also included in these isolation hubs and quite a number of them have returned home wherein they provided the many grievances they felt in being in isolation. However, I think we all understand why this protocol was enacted and why isolation hubs were implemented in order to protect residents of Nunavut, and our government undertook these practices in order to save lives. Further, the funds set aside to provide support for the airlines will be the subject of our queries at a later date.

Nevertheless, our government had to make drastic decisions, albeit I am aware personally that this was done to protect Nunavummiut and funds had to be allocated for these measures. Now, we MLAs must also understand that we are in a very unusual situation, one we have never faced previously, where these funds were already spent before we could approve them and after the fact is where we are being asked to approve the funds. It seemed that our usual practices of preauthorized approvals were not followed and turned upside down, as usually members must first approve funding before the government can expend their allocated budgets, as this is the foundation upon which the democratic governments deal with budgetary items.

However, since this is a matter not faced previously, it resulted in unprecedented expenditures, as our government had to use (interpretation ends) special warrants, (interpretation) which I am glad to see, as it allowed them to finance the isolation hubs due to the urgent health situation. The expenditures will be reviewed at a later date by MLAs, but at this time we approve the use of

emergency funding to protect Nunavummiut and to properly manage the health measures the federal government imposed on the nation due to COVID-19 and since they faced this novel coronavirus previously not known. It resulted in hardships for our constituents, to our ministers, to our government, to employees, as well as to us the members.

This pandemic has caused much consternation, which is why I am mentioning this fact, Mr. Chairman, and we are all facing the unknown as to how the future will play out, but with respect to the isolation hubs, we may be required to use them for quite a number of months yet, as we do not know how long this will remain.

The expenditures will be the subject of questioning by members. However, we do not want to belittle the difficulties faced by our managers and health professionals in the Department of Health and other departments as well. In looking at the funds to date, we will have to review them and ask questions, so yes, we will challenge the usage of funds to ensure they were used properly. Nonetheless, as members, we all understand the rationale behind the measures adopted by the governments at all levels. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Opening comments? I see none. We are on page 4 of Bill 46. Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. I will open up the floor for questions under Directorate and there are items 1 through 5. If there are any questions anywhere on that page, I will now allow. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. First, I would like to thank the Government of Nunavut for stepping up and providing this emergency funding for the food security program. I'm sure that has definitely made a significant impact on countless children and youth. This food program was a joint effort between the GN and NTI, which both had contributed an equal amount of \$1 million. My first question is: how was it determined that \$2 million would be sufficient to cover this program cost? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As the school closures occurred in March, it was recognized at that point roughly how much we would typically spend to June, but we knew it would go on a little bit further. Probably Mr. MacKay would have the intimate details of how it was broken down to determine on the community needs. I think what ultimately led to the amount was determining the community needs and then work backwards from there. Mr. MacKay, through you, Mr. Chairman, would probably be able to give better detail on that.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickey. Mr. MacKay, please go ahead.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Thanks to the member for the question. The general plan was to provide funding to communities to replace the programs that were delivered in the schools as a first step, but also to address some of the needs of the more vulnerable

populations that were affected by COVID. The Government of Nunavut had around a million dollars based on what its budget was for that program and NTI had generously agreed to match that amount.

The way we approached it was just to give an amount to each community based on population. There were three tiers, so one tier was \$40,000, the second tier was \$90,000, and the third tier was \$200,000. They were given a contribution agreement. The parameters were pretty wide. They had the full fiscal year to use the money and they had an obligation to report back to EIA what they spent the money on. Most of the communities have reported back, so we have information on how they used the money and I can provide that to the member if he likes. I have it all in front of me here. I can read it out, but I can also provide it in writing if you would like.

Some of the things that were spent were, for example, in Arviat there was a food hamper program that went to 300 households; 630 households in Arviat were given cleaning supplies. In Arctic Bay there were food hampers given to the community; country food purchased for elders. It was based on whatever needs the community saw that they needed to fulfill. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. MacKay. Questions? Mr. Qirngnuq, if you could move to this chair up here, please.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Within this subject matter that colleagues are questioning, specifically on page 15 relating to the expenditures of funds, we have

experienced some unanticipated events throughout the summer.

Now, in looking at the isolation hubs and the communities, such as Ottawa, where it states there are three facilities, there is a new secondary facility. Mr. Chairman, with respect to the overall spending related to these hubs, I expect the final amounts to be fairly high.

How is the government planning to deal with the pandemic if cases occur in the communities, especially since the pandemic is still ongoing today? I expect cases to reach us, Mr. Chairman, and I wanted to clearly understand our plans here. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Qirngnuq. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: I'm sorry. I caught most of the question, and I got a little confused. There are two hubs in Ottawa; the construction hub and then our hub. Maybe the member could clarify the question a little bit.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Qirngnuq, if you could clarify your question, please.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask my question in English so you can understand.

(interpretation ends) In the MLA briefing notes on page 15 under "Financial Implications" under bullet 1, site hub manager, Ottawa, under isolation, guest service coordinators, there is bullet 1, three hubs, Ottawa; three hubs, Ottawa, new. Do we really need a new hub in Ottawa when we have the hub again in Ottawa since COVID

has been into our country, and we are very careful of not getting it into our territory? Our people who go for medical don't like to stay in the isolation hub.

Now, in this case, how can we use the money that we are looking at now in putting a hub in our territory?
(interpretation) Mr. Chairman, I hope that was clear. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My apologies. I forgot about the construction hub in Ottawa, so that is why I thought it was only two.

One of the things, obviously, is we are going to need these in place until we have a proper treatment, enough rapid testing to be able to ease restrictions, and I know my officials at the Department of Health and the officials with the chief public health office are working on alternatives to the full 14-day isolation. It is a work in progress.

If I understood the member's questions correctly, as these restrictions change or as we can adapt, hopefully we won't need to use all of the money that we are appropriating in the time frame that we want. We might have to extend past the December that we are planning on. We may have to come back for more money at some point, but we want to maximize the dollars that we have right now to make sure that we are only spending what we need. We are not treating this like a blank cheque; do whatever it takes to do, but we are working very diligently.

It is not cheap to try to accommodate literally thousands of people staying for

a two-week period. It is difficult for all of our residents as they go through these isolation hubs to spend that time solitary or sometimes stuck in the room with family for two weeks is not as much of a holiday as some people might think.

We take these measures very seriously and that has probably been the hardest component out of all of these. Like Mr. Main said in his comment, how much is a human life worth? That's why we have been basing our decisions on what's the safest thing to do or the least risk to our population. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now, our colleague representing Arviat North and Baker Lake, I believe, stated that life for the average Inuk is quite hard. We are aware of that fact. Nonetheless, as we face this COVID-19 pandemic today, we must plan so that we aren't overwhelmed, at least in my thinking.

Many of us would not want to leave our relatives behind, and this applies to all of us, irrespective of our skin colouration. We will all want to remain in our communities to help if hardship or difficulties arrive at our doors. In thinking of that scenario, I am asking about the funding.

We need concrete plans in case of the arrival of the pandemic, especially as a government. Obviously we are not provided with endless amounts of funding to operate as a government, and we have always had a hard time trying to find more funding. Now, in that context, we want this government to take into

careful consideration and for MLAs to propose possible solutions within our constituency communities. Mr. Chairman, this is not a question but more of a suggestion. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you for your comment. Minister Hickes, if you wanted to comment on that, please go ahead.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I didn't respond to the member's question when he first brought it up of having what I presumed he meant to have isolation hubs in-territory. It was looked at and we almost made that step at one point for the backlog of medical travellers. There were some discussions and we were looking into it, and then of course, as soon as we started reaching out to medical travellers if they would be interested in that method, of course it hit social media and then the backlash was unbelievably quick. It was something we were just looking at and we were getting crucified.

I guess the biggest challenge and one of the things that we ran into was how to get the people here and safely and make sure that they were maintaining their isolation. That's one of the issues that we have had in our isolation hubs in the south of people breaking isolation. If somebody breaks isolation and they're already in the territory, that's an increased risk to the entire territory or at the very least, that community. Our preference, obviously, is to have people isolate outside the territory so that we know they're COVID-free when they come into the territory. I hope that responds to the member.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a question with regard to Nunavut isolation hubs. They're in three provinces: Alberta, Manitoba, and Ontario and possibly Quebec for construction workers. In saying that, Nunavut is the only territory in Canada that is accessible by air and airlines are subsidized by the Government of Canada, if I'm correct, and also by the GN.

Now, my question is, the isolation hubs across Canada, can Canada look at a Nunavut-specific subsidy to subsidize the isolation hubs? Can that be negotiated? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As noted, we have used some federal monies that were provided to us to offset some of our costs in the isolation hubs and it continues to be a topic of discussion at different levels of different ministries. I brought it up myself with my counterparts on how we have taken this step. Again, it seems to be working to now that any assistance that any of our partners could provide to help keep Nunavummiut safe from COVID-19 for as long as possible or at the very least be able to control it when it does come here. We are getting some third party assistance for this and we're going to continue to request more. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for your response. In reading my briefing notes, the total of \$26,143,000 to meet assumed financial obligations of 6,200 isolating guests up to October 31, 2020, which is next month, has your department looked past October 31, 2020? It's my final question, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Right now what we are looking at is basically to the end of December. If necessary, if we needed to go back and hopefully we would know that in the next weeks or a low number of months where we could bring something in the fall session if we're forecasting additional needs. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickey. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We're on the topic of airline funding. I just wanted to clarify that. Okay.

We are talking about two airlines. First of all, thanks to the government for giving us quite detailed information in terms of the amounts or the flow of money to the two airlines. It all goes back to March when the severe travel restriction was put in place and in the briefing material it says that a request for relief from under the medical duty contract was made by Canadian North. My first question is: was there any obligation on behalf of the government to pay money to Canadian North under that medical duty contract?

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, there's no financial obligation, and that was just to do with the scheduling. We had minimum requirements established with their medical and duty travel contract and the exemption they were looking for is to reduce the number of trips into a community. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickey. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) So then in March, our briefing material says that the GN reached out to Canadian North to pay the airline \$1.46 million per week. When the GN reached out with that offer of support, what conditions have been put in place tied to that funding? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you Mr. Main. Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was a three-way negotiation. Transport Canada was, I would say, the lead on it, where we were going to them requesting funding assistance to assist us with keeping the airlines basically solvent; that they would still be able to fly. The direction from Transport Canada or agreed upon method was to pay the airline as if we were using our normal volumes; medical travel, duty travel, and that's what they asked the partners to provide that

funding for. That is where the \$1.46 million came from. That is how much we would typically spend on a weekly basis with Canadian North and then... .

I will stop there. I am sure that the member has other questions on the next phases. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) The \$1.46 million was based on the medical duty contract volumes and then the next, I call it “chunk” of funding to go to the end of June, it was agreed upon. What basis was that amount determined on? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is where it got a lot more complicated, where we had to work with legalese and having non-disclosure agreements to access the financial records of a private corporation that had really no obligation to share financial details and had some competitive information in there that could potentially be detrimental to any private industry. That is where we had to sit down with our financial people, with Transport Canada as well, to look at the books on a jurisdictional basis, and that is where it got really complicated.

We wanted to make sure that we are not subsidizing other routes that aren't in Nunavut or helping to support other jurisdictions that already have their own

arrangements made, like the NWT and Northern Quebec had arrangements made with the shared airlines. That is where it got very complicated in taking a look at what the necessary revenues were to meet the expenses and different conditions on maintaining minimum standards of flight, making sure that there were conditions within the contract that would not provide extra profit. That was a concern for all of us.

I know I mentioned it numerous times with media at different press conferences that at the end of the day I do realize what you had mentioned earlier is we have taken extraordinary measures of spending the money first before asking if we could have it. One of the things that I wanted to make sure is that we were doing our due diligence to make sure that... . These funds that we are expending are taxpayer dollars. We recognize that. We wanted to make sure that we were getting the value for what we're investing in to keeping the airlines solvent. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In terms of what the minister had mentioned, excess profit, or looking at things through that lens in terms of the cost of operating within the airlines, what types of expenses are prohibited? The minister mentioned costs tied to other jurisdictions, let's say the Northwest Territories. What other types of things are not allowed to be expensed by the airlines under this arrangement? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of easy examples; capitalization of infrastructure is a normal liability to an organization, such as an airline with the planes and buildings and everything that they have. We didn't agree to pay any of that capitalization. They would have to eat that, as well as executive bonuses. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just on that topic of executive bonuses, so we are talking about the shareholders of Canadian North, so that is Makivik. Was there any negotiation or conversation between cabinet... ? I'm not sure who it would be, whether it is the Minister of ED&T or the Premier. Was there any coordination or discussion of this situation that the airline, Canadian North, was in with the Makivik Corporation? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm just not quite clear on the member's question. Maybe if you could just clarify it again or repeat it again; maybe I'm missing something. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I am trying to understand whether the

negotiations between Canadian North and the Government of Nunavut, and Transport Canada... Did the conversations around this issue involve the Makivik Corporation at any point? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Yes.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) What was their involvement? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main. I'm sorry. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Mr. MacKay was directly involved in those discussions, maybe Mr. MacKay might be best suited to respond to that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. MacKay.

Mr. MacKay (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Thank you, member, for the question. Thank you, minister. To the specifics of Makivik's involvement, that was more at the political level, so president to Premier or minister, but it was pretty minimal. The main negotiations were conducted between executives at the corporation, Canadian North Corporation, their legal counsel and financial advisors, as well as their equivalents at the Government of Nunavut. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Okay, so I will leave that alone for now.

My last question on the Canadian North topic is: what were the scenarios that were in front of the government when going back to March and April? What scenarios or what different options was the government looking at in terms of the ramifications if, I do not want to call it a bailout, but a cash infusion was not provided to this airline, Canadian North? What different scenarios were considered? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If the Chairman and member will indulge me a little bit, I would like to go back a little bit to the arrangement on offsetting. The topic has not come up yet, but we are talking about millions and millions of dollars going to an airline that a lot of people out in the general public think is just gone, that we have just given this cash to the airlines with nothing back.

There are two conditions that are worth noting with the agreement that we have with the airlines. One is that they have to provide an independent audited statement of their revenue and expenses after the fact, and any unused portions of the money that we give them we get back. In addition to that, any seats that we have used for duty and medical travel, we have invoiced, but we are getting that money back from the airline as well, basically up to that amount that

we are providing this contribution to them. As an example, if we give them \$1 million and we use \$600,000 in seats, technically we have only given them \$400,000, or if we use \$1.2 million in seats, we would only get charged \$200,000.

We are still getting our seats and our medical travellers, any duty travel would immediately offset what we have contributed to them, so we are getting something back at least, but to deal... . Now I forget where I was going with the member's question.

>> *Laughter*

Sorry. Oh, yes, sorry. Basically at an extreme point, the airlines would have stopped flying. At a certain point within the airline industry if you are not getting any revenue, the planes are better off on the ground. In an extreme case where if they would have refused to fly and service, obviously it would have negated our medical and duty travel contract altogether, but at an extreme example we could have had to start chartering planes to bring things around.

We did have some preliminary work done to see what would happen if Canadian North stopped flying tomorrow. It would have taken us probably at least a week to ten days to get arrangements in place for charters to bring food and medical supplies in, never mind the movement of people around. It would have been a logistical nightmare. Technically we could have been in a very serious position of being cut off from the rest of the world. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) In the briefing material it mentions that there was some input from the public health office indicating that they needed four flights per week between Ottawa and Iqaluit to effectively conduct COVID-19 testing. Did Public Health provide input just on that route specifically or did they also give input as to all the other communities in the territory? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, at an absolute minimum, flight requirements that were needed to the communities were absolutely involved in that. Even then, realizing with our testing capacity and the turnaround times, some communities, if they only get a flight twice a week and our flights here in Iqaluit, as an example, are only four times a week, sometimes it was taking close to a week just to get the lab samples down to the testing centre.

Now we have built a bit of capacity in the territory to be able to do some preliminary testing here, but we still have to send the swabs down for confirmatory testing, which brought us to the point where we have to have these charters on standby. If there's too much of a time between scheduled flights and there's a potential outbreak, we've got the opportunity and ability now to actually send a charter to grab those swabs, get them down here, and get a quicker turnaround time so that we can

stop or control any outbreaks in a community. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) The independent audited statement that will be prepared or provided after this funding period ends, what's the time period for that or what time period will that independent audited statement cover? The reason I ask that is if a business is making profit in good times, they could accumulate surplus cash and they could be sitting on a stack of cash or they could pay out dividends to their shareholders, and I would expect the business to tap into that unspent cash or basically share the burden of the lean times, which was the COVID lockdown periods starting in March. How far back will the independent audited statement go to show the expenses related? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It would have started in March when the first agreement was made with Transport Canada and the airlines. The subsequent agreements did have that independent audit requirement to it for that period of time and then those independent audit reports have to be provided within 90 days of the end of the term. We're right on the verge of getting the ones from the airlines from our first phase of funding, then after this next phase, once it gets agreed to, we're very close, once it gets agreed to, it will

have the same conditions. They wouldn't be able to give money out. It would show up on their financials, so it would get caught. If they want to take money after and provide something, it wouldn't be of value.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Shifting to Calm Air, the briefing material indicates that it was shortly after the first funds for Canadian North were agreed upon that the GN approached Calm Air regarding an injection of cash, I'll call it that. Calm Air is owned by a parent company, Exchange Income Corporation, which is publicly traded. How different are those two scenarios where you have a publicly traded company versus privately owned? How did that impact the discussions with Calm Air as compared to Canadian North? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The discussions were identical. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Did the discussions also involve Calm Air's owner, Exchange Income Corporation? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. MacKay nodded his head, yes. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Coming to the two shareholders, Exchange Income Corporation and Makivik Corporation, have they made any decisions on whether to contribute? Is there any indication that they will be feeling the pain as well of the COVID restrictions or are those discussions simply political in nature? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There has been very little political discussion on any of these agreements. I don't even know all the details of how the discussions go. We have left it to the financial people, the lawyers, and our in-house experts to get us through these negotiations, and then I find out the end result and we bring it to cabinet and, with the information that is available to us, make our decision on whether it is a value to proceed. Mr. MacKay would probably be able to give you a little bit better information on exactly how that dialogue goes, through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Mr. MacKay.

Mr. MacKay: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. Just to address the member's question, the agreement is set up so the airline can't function as if COVID never happened. They do feel some of the pain of COVID, but at the same time we need to have a minimum level of service.

The way our agreement is set up is we looked at their financials to determine what level of funding they would need in order to provide us with the minimum level of service that we require without, as the minister said, giving a profit or paying undue bonuses or dividends to shareholders. That is where we tried to end up.

We also put in stopgaps, as the minister mentioned, so that if at the end of the period...and we had a period of April to July. We are now negotiating a July to December period. At the end of those periods, they do have to give us back money that is owed to us and we expect during both periods that the actual amount of funding that we have given to them, some portion of that will come back to the government.

Just to go back to your point, this is a negotiation and I think we both gave up some things. We don't have the same service we would like, but at the same time I don't think the airlines have the same revenues they would have, absent COVID. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. MacKay. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Did either of the airlines, Calm Air or Canadian North, approach their

respective shareholders looking for a bailout, or not a bailout, an injection of cash? Did Canadian North approach Makivik? I'm not sure how that would function exactly because they are the parent corporation, but did the government get assurances that that avenue for additional equity had been explored? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wouldn't have been made aware of any of those discussions. That would have been an internal corporate discussion that we wouldn't be privy to. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The airlines didn't give any indication that they had asked their shareholder for funds. Did either of the shareholders, Exchange Income Corporation or Makivik, give indications on whether they were prepared to provide additional equity? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Main. Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not that anyone here is aware of. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to move a motion to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. There's a motion on the floor to report progress and the motion is not debatable. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Good day. No. 20. (interpretation ends) Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Rumbolt.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bills 45, 46, and 47 and would like to report that Bills 45 and 47 are immediately ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) There's a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder?

>>*Laughter*

Mr. Savikataaq seconds the motion. The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

(interpretation) No. 21. (interpretation ends) Third Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Item 21: Third Reading of Bills

Bill 45 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, No. 4, 2019-2020 – Third Reading

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My apologies with the musical chairs.

I move, Mr. Speaker...oh.

>>*Laughter*

My apologies. It has been a long day, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Cambridge Bay, that Bill 45, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 4, 2019-2020*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): The motion is in order. To the motion.

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

Speaker (interpretation): All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and (interpretation ends) Bill 45 is ready for assent.

Third Reading of Bills. No. 22. (interpretation) I'm sorry. (interpretation ends) Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Bill 47 – Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2020-2021 – Third Reading

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Rankin Inlet South, that Bill 47, *Supplementary Appropriation*

(Capital) Act, No. 1, 2020-2021, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. To the motion.

An Hon. Member: Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 47 is ready for assent.

Third Reading of Bills. (interpretation) There are no more. No. 22. (interpretation ends) *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *Orders of the Day* for September 25:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions

12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters

13. Tabling of Documents

14. Notices of Motions

15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills

16. Motions

17. First Reading of Bills

18. Second Reading of Bills

19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters

- Bill 46

- Tabled Document 65 – 5(2)

20. Report of the Committee of the Whole

21. Third Reading of Bills

22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) This House stands adjourned until Friday, September 25, 2020, at 9 a.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 18:04*

