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Iqaluit

Speaker: The Honourable Paul Quassa, MLA

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

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(Quttiktuq)

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(Amittuq)

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(Uqqummiut)

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Minister responsible for Indigenous
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Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
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(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

*Government House Leader; Minister
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responsible for the Status of Women*

Hon. David Joanasic
(South Baffin)

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Thursday, February 25, 2021**

Members Present:

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

>>House commenced at 13:30

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Paul Quassa) (interpretation): Good day. Before we proceed, can you say the opening prayer, please, Mr. Qirngnuq.

>>Prayer

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Member Qirngnuq. Good day. Today we have some major business to deal with and hopefully everything works out. It's not quite Friday yet. Let's proceed. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Environment, Mr. Savikataaq.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

**Minister's Statement 541 – 5(2):
Northeast Mainland Caribou
Survey Plans**

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My daughter-in-law celebrated her birthday yesterday in Arviat. Today her husband, my son, is

celebrating his today. Son, I wish you enjoy your birthday. (interpretation ends) Happy birthday, *irnik*. (interpretation) On the flipside, daughter-in-law, please treat my son well today.

>>Laughter

(interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to inform my colleagues about the Department of Environment's continued effort to determine the abundance and status of the Ahiak, Lorillard and Wager Bay populations of barren-ground caribou, known collectively as the Northeast Mainland herds.

Though the Ahiak herd had its abundance estimated in June 2011, the Wager Bay and Lorillard herds have yet to have their abundance assessed. There is currently no understanding of the herds' current population trends.

Mr. Speaker, in the wake of barren-ground caribou population declines, the timely assessment of abundance of these herds is a priority for my department and for the communities harvesting from these populations. As you may recall, my department had planned this assessment for June 2020, but these plans were cancelled due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

While completion of this multi-herd survey effort is not guaranteed for June 2021 due to continued restrictions around the pandemic, the Department of Environment is moving forward to plan and initiate this survey, hoping it can go forward in a few months.

Mr. Speaker, these three herds remain a significant and important source of food for the communities of Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven, Taloyoak, Kugaaruk, Igloolik, Sanirajak, Naujaat, Chesterfield Inlet, Rankin Inlet, and Baker Lake and, on occasion, Whale Cove, Coral Harbour, and Arviat. Concerns of potential overharvesting and declines have been raised by hunters and trappers organizations. By conducting these population surveys, we will be able to accurately assess the population and distribution to help identify any pressures on the herds that may be causing decline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Minister's Statement 542 – 5(2): Safe Sober Drop-in Pangnirtung

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Good day, Mr. Speaker and the people of Rankin Inlet. I also wish a happy birthday to Joe Savikataaq Jr.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, providing programs at the community level is an excellent way to create engagement and foster ownership of health programs across the territory. Every year the Department of Health supports hamlets with funding and resources to start initiatives.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I am excited to announce a new three-year project underway in Pangnirtung. This project has the hamlet operating and maintaining a drop-in centre for

individuals looking for support to stay sober and find safety from violence. This project, initiated by the hamlet, started with a request to the government for help because of increasing incidents relating to drugs, alcohol, and violence in their community.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the centre will provide supportive listening, skill-building programs, and referral services for those dealing with problems related to alcohol, drugs, gambling, and violence. With funds from the National Inuit Suicide Prevention Strategy, this project is funded through a trilateral agreement worth \$2.7 million between the Government of Nunavut, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and the Government of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that this government, with the help of its partners, is able to support our communities in this way. This safe drop-in centre, which opened in December, offers cultural activities, on-the-land healing programs, and various services to assist in developing safe and healthy lifestyles. Through this program, Pangnirtung aims to reduce incidents of violence, suicide, and accidental deaths.

Mr. Speaker, this important program demonstrates the Department of Health's commitment to supporting community-driven programming and enhancing the health and well-being of Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Education, Mr. Joanasie.

**Minister's Statement 543 – 5(2):
Remote Learning and Wellness
Resources for Families**

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to Nunavummiut and members, as well as the residents of South Baffin.

Mr. Speaker, the resiliency of Nunavummiut has been tested in many ways during the COVID-19 pandemic. As our schools have transitioned to remote learning and working from home, our students, their families, and their educators have been presented with new challenges and opportunities.

The Department of Education has supported students and their families by prioritizing health and wellness in everyday learning, and making information available on Angirrami Ilinniarniq, our educational resource website.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, in addition to this, I am pleased to announce that my department has developed three additional resources to support students and families during the pandemic.

Strategies for Supporting Remote Learning during COVID-19 is a guide that provides information to parents and guardians on what remote learning is and how they can support their children's education while they learn at home. *Caring for Our Children and Ourselves* during COVID-19 provides information for the whole family on managing stress and establishing healthy routines. Finally, *What is Coronavirus?* is a children's book that explains what the

coronavirus is and how to protect ourselves and others.

Mr. Speaker, these resources are available on the Department of Education's website in all of Nunavut's official languages. It is my hope that they will provide additional support to Nunavummiut as we all navigate these unprecedented times. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

**Minister's Statement 544 – 5(2):
Independent Review Update**

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon and I say "good day" to the people of Pangnirtung.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the Nunavut Housing Corporation constantly strives to improve its processes and programs to ensure it operates in a fiscally responsible manner that supports action on government priorities and meets the needs of Nunavummiut. This is in accordance with the Katujjiqatigiinnivut priority laid out in the Government of Nunavut's *Turaaqtavut* mandate.

To achieve this goal, the corporation hired NVision Insight Group Inc. to conduct an independent review of the public housing rent scale to address concerns related to its application and fairness to Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, the corporation provides social housing to over 20,000 tenants in approximately 5,869 public housing units. With 60 percent of Nunavummiut living in public housing, it is important to examine every aspect of the services the corporation provides to ensure the system works at its best and that everyone is treated fairly.

The corporation also hired Colliers Project Leaders Inc. to conduct an independent review of the construction allocation methodology, the construction cost and methods, and an analysis of the economic leakage caused by the transient workers.

Mr. Speaker, the mid-term reports of these reviews are expected shortly. I look forward to tabling the final reports later this year. I will continue to keep my colleagues updated as work progresses. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

**Minister's Statement 545 – 5(2):
Circuit Courts Resume**

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Nunavut Court of Justice is dedicated to bringing the justice system to Nunavut communities. Travelling circuit courts ensure that every person in Nunavut has access to the Nunavut justice system without having to leave home to be heard.

On every regular business day there is a court party sitting in a community hall or boardroom somewhere in Nunavut. In

2021 the Nunavut Court of Justice circuit court will sit for at least 405 days in various communities outside of Iqaluit.

During both COVID-19 lockdowns, circuit court travel and the court docket were suspended. The Nunavut Court of Justice remained operational by phone and open for emergency applications. Mr. Speaker, this ensured that the administration of justice continued in Nunavut and that bail hearings, child welfare hearings, and other emergency services were able to continue.

I am happy to inform Nunavummiut that the Nunavut Court of Justice has been back on circuit since mid-January and is visiting Nunavut communities once again. Mr. Speaker, the decision to restart circuit court was made in consultation with community leaders, the legal community, and the chief public health officer.

I encourage Nunavummiut across our territory to welcome the court back into their community and I thank the judges, lawyers, Crown prosecutors, court workers, interpreters, and community stakeholders who help make the operation of the circuit court possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

**Minister's Statement 546 – 5(2):
Adoptive and Foster Parents**

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr.

Speaker. Good afternoon and it's good to see that some members have arrived.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge all adoptive and foster families in Nunavut. These families provide welcoming, loving and safe homes to children and youth throughout the territory. There are many ways to become a parent and these incredible families have chosen to welcome children and youth into their hearts and their homes through the adoption and foster process.

In Nunavut there are three types of adoptions available to families: custom, departmental, and private. These options provide an opportunity for children to have a forever family and an opportunity to stay connected with their culture and community.

Nunavummiut who are interested in adoption should visit the Department of Family [Services] website for more information or contact their local family wellness office.

The Department of Family Services would also like to offer our sincere appreciation and thanks to the hundreds of dedicated foster parents throughout our Nunavut communities, who open their homes and their hearts to children in need. (interpretation) Thank you.

>>Applause

(interpretation ends) I'm pleased to report that the department has begun foster parent training to assure that the physical, psychological and emotional needs of children and youth are fulfilled. The training is geared to support

placement stability as well as the retention of foster parents.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage Nunavummiut to consider fostering a child today. Nunavummiut interested in becoming a foster parent must complete a foster parent application at local family services offices and submit it to a community social services worker. Nunavummiut interested in applying can also apply in person, of course, with the help of our community support. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements. Continuing on. Members' Statements. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 795 – 5(2): Housing Issues

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to voice my concern about the elders' housing.

Mr. Speaker, there are quite a few elders who are tenants of the Nunavut Housing Corporation's public housing and at times they are housed where there are a lot of stairs and where there are no rails available.

Just recently I was trying to help an elder and that elder received a letter and was told that they could go through a process to evict an individual they are living with in the same house. That's the complete opposite of *Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit*. This elder was

concerned because at times they have to bring in their relatives who are waiting for a house and therefore there's overcrowding in the elder's home.

Mr. Speaker, I know that lack of housing in Nunavut has had a very negative impact on all the communities and we want to help, but we also have to apply *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* when we're dealing with elders because, within the government, they state that *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* are the foundation of this government.

I have never known of an elder evicting a young person from their rental housing unit. We have to make sure that the elders are properly placed and not to be intimidated and to be in a friendly environment. I will be asking questions at the appropriate time about this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

**Member's Statement 796 – 5(2):
Arviat Declares Local State of
Emergency**

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for recognizing me. I say "good day" to the people of Arviat and Whale Cove during the blizzard, as we are experiencing a blizzard today.

Mr. Speaker, the Hamlet of Arviat, starting today, announced a local state of emergency in their community. That was implemented and I fully support it. It's very understandable that the Hamlet of Arviat has applied the state of emergency and they're following the public health orders and because they

support the public health orders ever since COVID-19 started.

To date the Hamlet of Arviat has had a lot of work to do not only providing the basic services but also doing other tasks over and above the line of duty in support of the people of Arviat and providing the needs of the people of Arviat. They have been doing that to date. They have supplied housing to all the people of Arviat. They provide information and games through the local radio station.

Mr. Speaker, the local communities are the closest to the people and they do provide a lot of help to their community. We also know that the Community and Government Services are working very closely with the hamlets and I do applaud the department for having a close working relationship with the communities and their support. I hope that there's a closer working relationship in the upcoming weeks and months.

At the appropriate time I will be asking questions to the Minister of Community and Government Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Member's Statement 797 – 5(2):
Congratulations to Katlyn
Amitnak Niego**

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon colleagues and to the people of Baker Lake, I know we have a blizzard back home and I hope you are all home and safe and warm inside.

Mr. Speaker, like all of Nunavut communities Baker Lake is home to many talented and creative artists. Baker Lake is also home to the world-renowned Jessie Oonark Centre which provides work space for local artists, carvers, seamstresses and toolmakers. Up to today we have many such artists still going.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to extend my congratulations to Katlyn Amitnak Niego, who is originally from Baker Lake, for winning this year's NorthwesTel art directory competition.

>>Applause

Katlyn's oil painting titled "Dancing Grizzly Bear" displays a lit qulliq and within the flames the grizzly bear can be seen dancing.

Mr. Speaker, for over 30 years, NorthwesTel has invited northern artists to submit their work for a chance to be featured on its regional phone directory covers. The artist who wins the competition for their region is awarded a \$5,000 prize.

Mr. Speaker, like all of Nunavut's communities, Baker Lake is home to many talented and creative artists. Baker Lake is also home to the world-renowned Jesse Oonark Centre, which provides a work space for local artists, carvers, seamstresses, and tool makers.

Mr. Speaker, I join with the community of Baker Lake in celebrating this honour, and I ask all members to join me in congratulating Katlyn on her achievement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We applaud the people of Nunavut when they are recognized for their contributions. Members' Statements. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Qirngnuq.

**Member's Statement 798 – 5(2):
Recognition of Essential Workers
during COVID-19**

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good Afternoon to the people of Netsilik.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the people in Netsilik. Mr. Speaker, this relates to our workers who arrive into our communities to conduct their work during the winter season, as it is obvious that working in cold weather is quite difficult, although it is much easier for non-northerners to work in the summertime.

Mr. Speaker, as the government, we have to gather workers who are committed and who persevere, who can replace these temporary workers in our communities. Although today, this challenge is quite hard, especially in light of this pandemic COVID-19, and it is stressful for workers who still have to work in these conditions and we have to try to lower their work hours as well.

Mr. Speaker, our government workers provided services to our residents, with nurse providing health care and this is a hard job, exacerbated by this pandemic. For those of us from Nunavut, we have to recognize these workers as while they are here, they are Nunavummiut like us as they are here to provide assistance. So, let us work together both those who arrived shortly and those who live here in our homelands as we are now fellow

residents. Let us work together, and the reason for why I rise today is to encourage more collaboration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Member's Statement 799 – 5(2): High Arctic Representatives with Qikiqtani Inuit Association

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When people I know celebrate their birthdays, I sometimes sing birthday songs on air, and I wanted to sing the birthday lullaby to Joe Jr., as today is his birthday.

Nonetheless, I rise today to speak about the recent QIA elections held during the holidays of winter solstice in the High Arctic, where all three of my constituency communities held elections, and one person was acclaimed, Paul Amarualik of Resolute. Liza Ningiuk was also re-elected and reappointed to the executive. As well, Levi Barnabas went for a higher position as a VP and was successful in his bid.

In Arctic Bay, another person elected was Jeremy Tuurngaaluk, I apologize. He was my assistant for the last three years, but he is now elected and I was proud of his successful run, although I thought he would remain my assistant, but he was elected as well to the executive and suddenly was thrust into a role with many duties and responsibilities.

He cannot remain my assistant, however, he will be representing his community and our Inuit, and I know his capabilities and I anticipate he will be successful in his new role. I wish to thank all of the voting public who went to vote in my constituency of High Arctic, so I hope that all four Inuit from the High Arctic will represent the Inuit well at the Qikiqtani Inuit Association. I will work closely with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Sheutiapik.

Member's Statement 800 – 5(2): Funeral Service in Iqaluit

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today acknowledge an event that will occur even though we are in session, as families who lose loved ones are usually quite distressed in losing their loved one, and here in Iqaluit there will be a funeral today and the family members are in my thoughts, and I want to send my condolences which is why I rise today to acknowledge their loss, which is unfortunate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. I have no more names on my list. Continuing on. No. 4. Returns to Oral Questions. I keep stating No. 5, but visitors are not allowed in our Chamber due to the pandemic, so we will just proceed. I welcome those who are following the proceedings, even though they are not here.

No. 6. Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 1156 – 5(2): Approaches to Housing Issues

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for recognizing me. Approaches to housing issues. That's the subject I'm going to be covering. I would like to direct my questions to the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, we are all aware that there is a severe shortage of housing in all Nunavut communities. We can't seem to go forward or backwards. Often, this leads to overcrowding and the many health and social issues that arise as a result of that overcrowding. When elders are involved, they can be taken advantage of as family members move into their dwelling.

Can the minister clarify what policies are currently in place to provide public housing tenants from being exploited by other individuals or family members who move into their homes? What policies are currently in place? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for the question. Whoever may be a tenant, an elder or not, if there are tenants and there's reason for applying for a house,

they have to fill out a form including who resides with them. If any changes may be in the household, they have to inform the housing association. These have to be updated on a regular basis, whether the tenant is an elder or not. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. We have many individuals, most tenants are elders than youth. I saw recently an elder... he can evict a person by way of a panel or not. This is not the Inuit practice. Elders today have difficulty evicting their youth because most often youth don't have housing, whether the elder becomes ill or is scared of the youth in the house.

Perhaps the minister can clarify what she may be able to do that the Nunavut Housing get full support and fully inform elders that inform the tenants fully what course of action they may take when they're in a difficult situation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your question. I believe too that the elders or whoever should not be in those situations. We would like to urge, when they are tenants, that they have to be prioritized and serviced and properly taken care of by their relatives and not be into crisis. They can work with the housing

association on what further actions they may take and if it's an emergency, they can be dealt with because we shouldn't just see elders being evicted from their homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I do recognize that as individuals we all have personal responsibilities. However, many Nunavummiut feel trapped between traditional ways of handling situations and the more formal, legal, bureaucratic system of a different culture.

Will the minister commit to working with local housing authorities and organizations to ensure that Inuit societal values and cultural principles are applied to the ways that support is provided to their tenants? I'm talking about especially elders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank Ms. Towtongie for her questions. We can work much closer with these organizations and I would like to urge as well and the Nunavut Housing Corporation is trying to work diligently when there are crisis or emergency situations in communities. We also work with social services and others on what course of action we may take, if it's not formalized by the GN, and these can be

looked into further and support given, but they also abide by policies that are in place too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Qirngnuq.

Question 1157 – 5(2): Support for Visiting Service Providers

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

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, in many of our smaller communities we rely on trained individuals who come from elsewhere to provide certain services. Being far from their home and often overworked, it is easy for these workers to feel stressed and burned out.

Can the minister describe what specific supports are provided to our public servants so that they do not feel overburdened while working so far away from their homes? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To his comments, we're talking about nurses and so forth, health care providers. They are able to have access to counselling and able to talk to their superiors when they are overworked or overburdened. They are able to correspond to their superintendents and also consult with them on what they may be able to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qirngnuq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) I also thank the minister for his response. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, we live in a very harsh climate, one of the harshest in the world. A short while ago in the Netsilik region, we almost lost a person who had come to deliver services in our community. As an MLA I would like to stress that our government needs to take good care of our service providers as they take good care of us.

Can the minister clarify how his department helps to prepare and orient service providers before they travel to communities that may be remote and very different from what they are used to? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With respect to nurses who come to the Arctic for the first time, they are provided support and they are oriented on what lifestyle we have. Some orientations are provided and when they are overstressed and when they don't talk about their problems, we are unable to help, but we would encourage more, in fact, to talk about their problems that they may have. Whether you're from the south or are a resident of Nunavut, if you feel that you need help, then seek that help. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for that clarification. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I feel it is important that service providers have information and guidelines to follow so that they will not become overburdened while they are providing services in our small, remote communities.

Will the minister commit to tabling in this House, before the end of the winter sitting, guidelines and orientation materials for service providers who are coming to work in Nunavut? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If possible, before this session ends, I will look into the questions. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Question 1158 – 5(2): Support for Arviat during COVID-19

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is for the Minister of Community and Government Services, (interpretation ends) Minister of CGS.

Mr. Speaker, in my opening member's statement I mentioned how important the role of the Hamlet of Arviat has been

during our COVID-19 outbreak here in the community; as well, the role of Community and Government Services in terms of providing support to the municipality.

My first question for the minister is: can the minister summarize the support that has been provided to the Hamlet of Arviat over the past three months and how the working relationship has gone? Through what tables or organizations has that relationship come together? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Good afternoon to Iqaluktuutiarmiut and all those in Nunavut, and I'm thinking of those in Arviat.

Mr. Speaker, the government dedicated \$6.2 million towards ensuring municipalities have additional financial sources to provide essential services within the communities. For the hamlets of Arviat and Whale Cove, Arviat received in April 2020 \$107,800, and in December 2020 the hamlet received \$215,600, and in Whale Cove the community received \$67,800 and \$135,600 in December. Recently the department received approval for \$250,000 for the communities of Arviat and Whale Cove.

Under the COVID support, the municipalities where the additional funding is used to provide additional cleaning and janitorial services,

additional janitorial staff to ensure increased cleaning, new signage, translation of COVID-19 public information, offset loss revenues due to facility closures, additional bylaw and compliance patrols, increased operational costs to support residential water delivery, and increased road clearing for emergency vehicles. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I again thank you on behalf of the community. Thank you very much for the support over the past year.

As I mentioned in my member's statement, the hamlet has declared a local state of emergency here in Arviat and at this point it's for seven days and they will make a decision if it will be extended for an additional seven days. What does this mean in terms of the relationship between the hamlet and the department? Does the local state of emergency mean that extra resources will or could flow to the Hamlet of Arviat? That's my second question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As Minister of Community and Government Services, I did receive the letter from the mayor and council regarding their declaration of a state of

emergency, and they have every right to do so. I mean, it's a long-standing outbreak and CGS believes they have that right to do so under the Health Act.

The department is currently reviewing the emergency measures identified under that declaration and we will work with the hamlet to assist them in identifying appropriate measures to address the emergency within the seven days of their declaration. The Department of CGS is working to coordinate with the Hamlet of Arviat. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) My last question is about Arviat but it's also, I think, important for other communities as well. In the past three months we have learned a lot, I think, as a community and maybe as a territory in terms of the challenges that COVID-19 posed to our community members as well as governments.

I'm going to ask for the minister's opinion on this, or I guess it's a bit of a larger question, but does the minister care to elaborate on any lessons learned over the past three months in terms of dealing with a COVID outbreak and specifically in terms of the relationship between her department and municipalities in Nunavut?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for his question. COVID is such a new thing for Canada, the world, and we're learning from it every day. I can't give my personal opinion, but we know from the time in March, 2020, from that time to today, Dr. Patterson and our team and his team, we've learned quite a bit from COVID and how it affects different communities and how it affects residents.

With what's happening in Arviat, we pray every day that we don't get the same thing in our other communities. We know that from your struggles... . even in my own community, because of the COVID restrictions, people are fatigued, people are tired. Every day is a learning progress for all of us.

My prayers are with your community and we hope that from what's happening in Arviat, we can make sure that if it hits another community, we know exactly what needs to be done so that we can stop the spread of COVID across Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1159 – 5(2): Government Liaison Office

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs.

As the minister is aware, the community of Sanikiluaq has been without a government liaison officer for a number

of months now. This vacancy has impacted the ability of my constituents to access services and information concerning government programs.

It is my understanding that there has been some progress in this area recently. For the record, can the minister update me today on the status of his department's efforts to recruit and fill the position of the government liaison officer in Sanikiluaq? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would gladly enlighten the member. Currently we have a casual position as a GLO in Sanikiluaq, and we're going to be in the process of advertising it. In the short-term, to get someone in there quickly as possible so Sanikiluarmiut can be serviced, we have hired a casual person to that position. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for that information. As the minister is also aware, the damage that Sanikiluaq suffered last fall as a result of the hurricane force winds has also meant that the government liaison officer has been without adequate office space.

Earlier this week I was pleased to receive a number of update from the Minister of Community and Government

Services regarding her work to improve the office space situation in the community through both short and long-term solutions.

Can the minister confirm that his department is working with the Department of Community and Government Services to obtain office space for the government liaison officer as part of the upcoming renovations of the community's old health centre? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do work with Community and Government Services minister on this matter. For the short term, CGS is in the final process of getting office space within the Almac trailer. Mr. Speaker, that's for the short term. As the Minister of CGS stated earlier, I believe she said that we're looking for a more permanent and longer term office space and that entails the old nursing station. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank both ministers and the departments for looking into this. It has been long overdue and it's very important to get this office back on track.

Also, with the amount of wind and water damage that had occurred back in

September to the government liaison office, it is my understanding that the computers and other equipment were also damaged, maybe even beyond repair. Can the minister confirm that the damaged office equipment has also been replaced? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can confirm to the member that I have been speaking with the motor vehicles minister and we're working on the cameras and the ability to issue licences and all the computer equipment. We should have all that there in place next month, March. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Question 1160 – 5(2): Digital Devices for Students

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Education today.

Mr. Speaker, on Monday the Minister of Education announced the purchase of 5,000 digital devices for remote learning with funding from the Government of Canada. The minister indicated that his department has prepared and distributed 1,433 of these devices to grade 11 and 12 students and teachers.

Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering: can the minister clarify how many of these devices were iPads and how many were

laptop computers? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the member for his question. According to the documents I have, the devices that were distributed for grades 11 and 12 are iPads, and the teachers for those grade levels received laptops. 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. It sounds a little better with an explanation like that.

I've just got one other question here. Mr. Speaker, I believe that laptop computers with keyboards would be much more beneficial for both teachers and students, especially if they have to type out reports or essays or grade the reports.

As he moves forward with distributing the remaining digital devices to, will the minister commit to ensuring that these devices are laptops with keyboards to better support both students and teachers with this education program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our department has been responding to the pandemic in different ways and providing devices is one way to support remote learning if a school or

community is in stage 4. Whether or not add-ons need to be included for iPads specifically on keyboards, I'm not entirely sure if every iPad is equipped with an additional attachable keyboard, but these matters are things that the department and the schools will be taking into account on what's working well, if we need to adjust our planning going forward.

Just also keep in mind that we do have a set of Chromebook laptops for schools that need to use those devices. There are Chromebooks as well. I'm not entirely sure of the exact numbers, but they are and for a total of 5,000 devices, a mix of iPads and laptops will be used for students in stage 4. 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. I did say that I had only one more question, but I thought I would add one more.

With the level of Internet we have in our territory, has the department ensured that our students would be able to use these Internet-capable devices to do their schoolwork should we incur a pandemic in more than one community across the territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Education, Minister Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. You've got to love technology.

I just got a note from my staff indicating that the iPads do have keyboards equipped with them.

Mr. Speaker, on the connectivity of these devices, every digital device that our department deploys has connectivity; Internet sticks that will be provided in case a school or community is in stage 4. They would have that connectivity equipped with it.

With that, I just wanted to also indicate that yes, there are broadband challenges in the territory, but I think there are some initiatives that our government is supporting and going forward in the long term for fibre optics. There's huge potential for growth in this area and I look forward to those going forward in the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Member Netser.

Question 1161 – 5(2): Replacement Air Terminal Building for Naujaat

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good day" to the people of Coral Harbour and Naujaat.

My questions are for the new Minister of Economic Development and Transportation. The residents of Naujaat are waiting for an update on the status of their airport and I wonder if the minister can briefly provide an update. Thank you.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are five airport improvement projects approved through this (interpretation ends) National Trade Corridors Fund (interpretation) specific towards the air terminal buildings. I forgot which year it was?

It was during our last sitting when I announced that the five projects would be amalgamated into one proposal, and at this time my staff are developing the request for proposal or (interpretation ends) tendering (interpretation) process for these five air terminal projects. To now, we are still developing the details for the work, and are now trying to implement our plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I believe they were deferred for an entire year, so I wonder if they will actually commence the work this summer. Since out of these five communities, Naujaat is one of the designated airports and I wonder if this project will proceed this summer?

They have been patiently awaiting this project for quite a while, as the current air terminal is too small to accommodate the passengers. I wonder if this project will go ahead this coming summer, based on the minister's previous statement that it would go ahead in the upcoming year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The requests for proposals will be put up in competition, the requests for proposals, and after we get those from the construction companies, we will see what kind of money we will have to deal with. That's the route we're taking right now. As to when they will start, we don't know yet, but it's in the tender stage, so I expect that it will actually happen, but we have to review the tender documents first. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It seems like the tender is finally going to be coming out, although they have been waiting a number of years. When will it open and when will it close and when will the announcement as to the successful bidder be made? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can't say a date yet, but when there is a plan to build large infrastructure, the tender documents are dealt with during the wintertime. My officials, as we were planning for this session, the paperwork is being worked on now and I expect that something will come out soon. Once the documents are put out, I can announce to my colleagues about it. The closing date has not been set yet, but it will be set. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1162 – 5(2): Nunavummi Nangminiqatunik Ikajuuti Regulations

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, who is responsible for the government's NNI Secretariat.

As the minister is aware, changes to the NNI Regulations were recently approved by the government and published in the December edition of the *Nunavut Gazette*. These changes indicated that new bid adjustment caps have been approved in relation to major construction projects.

For the record, can the minister clearly explain the government's reasons for making these changes, and can he describe what results these changes are intended to achieve? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Yes, I can confirm that we did make that change and that change was to cap it for up to \$500,000 for major bid adjustments, and that was for our major construction bids. With ongoing reviews that we do and in looking at our construction costs and the bids that do come, with that result, that's what we agreed to put a cap on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the response. During yesterday's question period, I asked the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation to clarify the extent to which these changes will impact the cost of constructing new public housing units in the territory. However, I did not get a clear answer, so I would like to ask the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation to clarify how his department has worked with the Nunavut Housing Corporation to develop the changes to the NNI Regulations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we were doing this review, we did it across the government; including Nunavut Housing Corporation and a lot of the work that was done was with the major departments and agencies that have major construction contracts such as Community and Government Services was a major player.

To put the limit on this for up to \$500,000; we picked that number because it was reasonable enough, because for major projects like an \$80 million project that had a huge implication on NNI. For Nunavut Housing Corporation, which their bids are not as high per project would not impact so much on the NNI.

Once you go past that certain amount, then this adjustment does have positive implications for our government and it's a wide spectrum in terms of the review that we did and we needed to determine where to find that cap. Through consultations with our departments and agencies this is what we as government had made the decision to implement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. The group that is referred to as NNI, just so that everybody will understand it's the Nunavut Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti policy; NNI. (interpretation ends) Your second and final supplementary question, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. For the last question for the minister; also further during yesterday's questions the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation indicated that Nunavummi Nangminiaqtunik Ikajuuti Implementation Act policy is currently under review.

Can the minister responsible for the policy clearly tell us today what specific changes to the policy are currently being considered? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) On January 15, 2021, as a result of this decision that we have made, there has been... the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated has filed their judicial review for the decisions that we have

made and that is currently within that review.

One of the discussions that we are having with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated is that we hope to settle this out of the courts in terms of looking at the review. As everybody should be aware is that a major review is set for 2022 for this particular policy. So, it's leading up to that. That's what some of the reviews that are taking place; there are numerous activities that are within this policy and regulation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, Member Angnakak.

Question 1163 – 5(2): COVID Information and Misinformation

Ms. Angnakak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon. (interpretation ends) I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Health. We haven't really talked about COVID today so I thought I'd ask some COVID questions just for something different.

Mr. Speaker, as I noted in my member's statement yesterday there's some serious misunderstandings in the public domain about the COVID vaccine. I have noted that there is some very good information on the GN website, but you kind of have to go looking for it.

Can the minister clarify what his department is doing to proactively address some of the misunderstandings and misinformation that is circulating about the COVID-19 vaccine to ensure that as many Nunavut residents as

possible can get vaccinated? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss COVID today. I think it's very important for us to keep COVID discussions out there because each day we get to reach out a little bit more to those that are seeking the information.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of ways our department is working with our COVID access team. Mr. Speaker, I just want to clarify this: our Health Pandemic Response Division has two arms, the special operations division and client services. Through this Pandemic Response Division we have a website, which I'm sure that my colleagues have accessed and many of those Nunavummiut who have access to it have accessed the COVID-19 website, and in there the COVID response team has been putting in information regarding where to go for different kinds of information dealing with COVID, and in there, there are some points or bullets where you could access information regarding different aspects of COVID, things like finding out what kind of things you should be aware of before you go and get your vaccine, and so on.

In terms of clarifying with people who have concerns, we have also been doing in the communities, before the team begins vaccinations in a community, the team has been going on the community radio in each community, and Dr. Patterson has been there with his support staff and I have participated in as many as I can to answer questions the teams

have. They have some really interesting and really good questions, every one of them is always interesting, and they ask everything from if I have this illness, should I see a doctor or should I get the shot, and so on. It's covered that way.

I think we need to do more in terms of non-media. What I mean by that is by non-Internet access. I think that's very important and we're doing that through some television and radio ads that encourage people to call the toll-free numbers and stuff. I know we could do more and our team is always looking to improve that communication, but in a nutshell, that's the approach we have been taking through the team. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. Yes, I think it's very important to address this in all ways because, just from my own personal experience in talking with people about the vaccine, I'm quite taken aback by some of the reasons and misunderstandings about why somebody wouldn't.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that we all know someone who is struggling mentally with concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, with fear about the vaccine or the impact of isolation and major adjustments to life as we knew it before the pandemic.

Can the minister describe how his department has dealt with the increase in demand for counselling and mental health services specifically related to the

COVID-19 pandemic? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Our department and our team has been working very hard in order to deal with all kinds of questions.

Mr. Speaker, I want the public to realize that their fears are real and if you have a fear for getting the needle because of whatever the reason is, it is real, it is your fear and you have a right to it, but we encourage you to talk with your public health nurse in your community or when the team goes into the community, there's ample opportunity to communicate with the nursing staff that travel with the team to answer and hopefully quell some of your concerns on this issue of the vaccine.

In terms of anxiety and being shut in at home in many cases, we do have a hotline and that hotline number is 888-975-8601 and we encourage you, if you have a telephone, to call that toll-free number and you will be given the right channel to call. They will ensure that you are in touch with the proper authorities and proper people to help you with whatever the situation you may have. It may be just a question or it may need mental help. Whatever it is, call that number, contact somebody and if you can, everybody, I think, knows their health centre numbers, call there, call somewhere like that and you will be directed to the proper authorities that can help you with whatever your concern should be. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for that useful information from the minister in his response. Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister recently stated that the federal government has distributed 14 million rapid test kits all across Canada. Dr. Anna Banerji, I think is how we pronounce it, an infectious disease specialist with northern experience, has stated that she believes rapid testing can play an important role in the fight against COVID.

A number of people have commented that perhaps we would not need such measures of isolation or even 14 days in the quarantine isolation hubs if we use rapid testing devices on a more routine basis. Can the minister clarify whether Nunavut has received any of these new rapid testing kits from the federal government and what consideration has been given to using them to reduce the need and the expense of isolation hubs in the south? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have rapid testing kits in the isolation hub in Winnipeg and in Ottawa, and we are working on, in those sites, to do some rapid testing and from there and from the findings we have through those tests, we are taking a look at how they may have a role to play in the future movement of where we're going with the isolation hubs and how

we could utilize the rapid testing. At this time it is part of the plan. We do have some and in the coming weeks or months we will be using those, I'm sure, in terms of dealing with the isolation hubs, the length of time people will be staying in them or not, I'm sure those testing kits will play a role in that in the coming months, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Member Qamaniq.

Question 1164 – 5(2): Completion of Marine Infrastructure

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good day” to the residents of my community, Nunavummiut, and my colleagues.

My question is for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation and his staff for coming to the community of Pond Inlet this past summer. In Pond Inlet we are getting marine infrastructure and it is slotted to be completed in 2021. My question is: would the marine infrastructure be completed this fall? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was very pleased to be able to go up there personally and physically see look at the

actual infrastructure, as opposed to simply looking at the designs on paper. We envy your community for having one built.

Following our timelines, we have slotted a time for it to be completed in the fall, as long as there are no delays between now and then. There is even the possibility that it could be finished earlier. As long as there are no hiccups, we anticipate on finishing it in the fall. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for responding to my question. The marine infrastructure design is very impressive and detailed, which is due to the fact that it was completed by very knowledgeable professionals.

Mr. Speaker, now that the minister and their staff have seen the actual site, we would like to voice a concern that we have about the 45-foot steel pile that I'm sure was seen, and that has been inserted onto the ocean bed. Since it's on steel piles, it's designed like that so that the larger fishing vessels can offload onto that infrastructure.

My question is: are those steel piles impaled onto the bedrock under the ocean, or is it because it's not imbedded into the rock that they suddenly decided halt the construction? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not exactly sure of the details surrounding the challenges that they were facing, but I do know that building company is doing what they can to examine the problems and come up with solutions that will allow them to proceed again with the construction.

The initial design plan for this infrastructure was developed and built so that fishing boats larger than 6 metres will be able to offload. They are currently looking at the reasons for some of the difficulties they're having with this initial plan, and will then decide whether changes need to be made, or if they will be able to leave it as is.

This is actually two different designs, one is designed for boats 6 metres and longer that will be the focus of future work to accommodate ships up to a certain length, however, this breakwater will include areas for boats to use the harbour, as that was the primary reason for this small craft harbour, and we anticipate that it will be completed this coming summer and fall.

However, we need to check all of the details for the area set aside for boats 6 metres and larger, as that will need to be included. At this time, I can't tell you exactly what will happen next, as I don't have the details and don't understand what the next steps they will be taking. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for his response. Once you get all the information, will the community of Pond Inlet be informed?

Once the contractors, administrators and designers have all met and decided on an appropriate plan to move forward, as well as the steps that will have to be followed in order to ensure that the project is completed according to the schedule that you have provided us, we would very much like to be kept informed.

We would really like to know if the currently existing infrastructure could be used by smaller vessels in the interim; while plans are being formed to address the issues surrounding the larger fishing boats. It would be a happy occasion for the community of Pond Inlet if we were able to make those announcements before the end of our term. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, we will make sure that you're updated. If there are going to be any changes, we will outline the proposed change and indicate the reason why changes were made. We are currently looking at the bedrock. Should there be a major change, we will definitely make sure that you are informed. That was a very good question and I'll make sure that we keep you and

your community informed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. I have no more names on my list. We will proceed with Item 7. Written questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Replies to Budget Address. Item 11. Petitions. Item 12. Responses to Petitions. Item 13. (interpretation ends) Reports of Standing and Special Committee on Bills and Other Matters. (interpretation) Item 14. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. (interpretation) Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Item 14: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 349 – 5(2): Declaration of a State of Emergency in Arviat

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Today I would like to table a declaration of a local state of emergency that was issued by the Hamlet of Arviat. The dates on the state of emergency are February 24 to March 2.

Mr. Speaker, the Hamlet of Arviat has taken this step due to the longevity of the public health emergency in Arviat, in support of the chief public health officer's public health orders for Arviat. I wish the municipality every success during the state of emergency.

I continue to encourage every department within the Government of Nunavut to offer additional support if warranted through the hamlet during this very challenging time.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I have already sent a copy of this letter to the Clerk for distribution to members. The Clerk has receipt of it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. (interpretation) Continuing on. No. 14. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Item 15: Notices of Motions

Motion 105 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 57, Tobacco and Smoking Act – Notice

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I give notice that on Monday, March 1, 2021, I will move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Hudson Bay, that the period of time for the standing committee to report Bill 57 back to the House be extended by a further 120 days. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions. (interpretation) No. 16. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. (interpretation) No. 17. (interpretation ends) Motions. (interpretation) Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Item 17: Motions

Motion 101 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 53, An Act to Amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Agreement Act

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) WHEREAS Bill 53, *An Act to Amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Agreement Act*, received second reading on October 22, 2020;

AND WHEREAS the bill has been referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation for consideration;

AND WHEREAS Rule 68(1) provides that a bill referred to a standing committee shall not be proceeded with until the Legislative Assembly receives the report of the committee or 120 calendar days pass from the time the bill was given second reading;

AND WHEREAS the standing committee has been giving careful consideration to the bill;

AND WHEREAS the standing committee requires additional time in which to complete its work;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Hudson Bay, that the period of time for the standing committee to report Bill 53 back to the House be extended by a further 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I want to very briefly state that the committee has been making steady progress on Bill 53, and we look forward to further work ahead. The standing committee recently sent correspondence to the sponsoring minister, and we look forward to reviewing his reply. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) To the motion. (interpretation) Member Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Bill 53, *An Act to Amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act*, is a significant piece of legislation, something that is extremely important not just to us here in the Assembly but to all Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is one of many that are before the Standing Committee on Legislation. Mr. Speaker, just as of last month, there were actually eight bills before the committee for our consideration, and as of yesterday, four more bills were added to our committee for review.

Mr. Speaker, one bill, being Bill 36, *Mental Health Act*, which has been under review since October 2019, has received somewhat of a priority, as it is extremely important. With that being said, I do believe that all these bills are important, none the least the *Royal Canadian Mounted Police Agreement Act*.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of police oversight has been a pressing subject since the standing committee's televised

review on the annual report of the Legal Services Board in the fall of 2018.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to state that I am grateful for the role that the RCMP plays in protecting our communities, and very recently I had an opportunity to go on a ride-along and witness firsthand how difficult it is for them to conduct their jobs. However, the LSB's televised hearing in 2018 and many media articles have identified that there are some issues and that the RCMP are not immune.

Mr. Speaker, there may be and there might have been some bad apples and there have been instances of excessive use of force in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, the current practice of police investigating police provides little accountability in the investigation process, especially when the final report is provided to the police themselves and they choose what, if any, portions of the report to be made public.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of police accountability and oversight has been brought up with the previous Minister of Justice regularly over the last two and a half years.

Mr. Speaker, when the protest began in response to George Floyd's death in May 2020 in the United States, this shed light on the issue of police brutality, and the protest spilled over the border and spread across Canada and in fact made its way to Nunavut and we had protests here in Iqaluit last June.

Shortly before, there was a video of a man in Kinngait struck by a door of a moving vehicle driven by an RCMP

officer. This video made national television.

Shortly after the Kinngait incident, the Minister of Justice publicly announced her intention to introduce the legislation in the fall of 2020 sitting, which would allow for independent police oversight. This is something that me and regular members were excited to hear and applauded.

When the fall sitting finally did come around and the Minister of Justice tabled Bill 53, *An Act to Amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Agreement Act*, the intention and the purpose of the bill was to allow for independent investigations into serious incidents involving police officers, moving away from the practice of police investigating police.

However, I would like to point out that the current Act has 19 references to contracted police forces. In a recent article on the bill which identified the fact that the bill would continue to allow the police investigation of police in Nunavut, it was the intention that... . The intended purpose of the inclusion of that into the bill was to allow for an overlap period or a coming into force.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill 53 is significant and is important to all Nunavummiut. The standing committee still has a number of outstanding issues that we would like to iron out before we feel comfortable in passing this bill.

Mr. Speaker, with that being said, this bill was just introduced a few months ago. The standing committee has and is doing its due diligence in reviewing the bill and its many clauses, but we

definitely do need some more time to give our full consideration to the bill before we are comfortable with being able to vote on it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) To the motion. Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the member, my fellow colleague from here in Iqaluit. That substantiated some of my arguments on why to not support this motion.

Mr. Speaker, I realize that the standing committee is still awaiting some information and that will be coming very shortly and I still think it's an opportunity to be able to address this bill this sitting.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of civilian oversight of serious incidents involving the RCMP has received a lot of attention and is vital to ensure police transparency and trust in Nunavut. Nationally it's a call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and from the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry. Territorially this was a recommendation put forward in the Nunavut Black History Society's call for racial justice petition and an appeal from the public in light of recent and historical interactions between Inuit and the RCMP.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is the legislative mechanism we need to put this important oversight and accountability into place in Nunavut. Our current RCMP agreement does not allow us to do this. There are no provisions around civilian

oversight of serious incidents, which means we have to follow the federal legislation, which only allows reviews by a contracted police force or, in the absence of a contracted police force, the RCMP themselves.

Mr. Speaker, we need this legislative amendment in order to sign an agreement with a civilian oversight body. Our government's commitment to move forward quickly is reflected in this budget. That's why we are requesting \$250,000 for the purposes of entering into an agreement with a civilian oversight body. Ensuring we have the appropriate legislation and regulations in place to support this new civilian oversight body is critical. Delaying these amendments means less time to create the regulations to support and implement it.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes the engagement of the Standing Committee on Legislation and Committee of the Whole is necessary to ensure its success. I urge members not to further delay the consideration of this bill to a later sitting and put it in jeopardy of falling off the order paper if it cannot be approved in the spring sitting.

The impact of delaying the passage of this bill during this government means we will continue to lack the necessary powers to implement cultural safety and community consideration through civilian oversight and police reviews, as we will be bound by our existing Act to use a contracted police force to review serious incidents.

Mr. Speaker, we have committed to improving the relationship between the

RCMP and Nunavummiut and this bill is a vital part of this commitment. I ask members to join us in supporting these efforts by considering this bill this session.

Mr. Speaker, I am requesting a recorded vote, please. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) To the motion. A recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour, please stand and sit down when I call your name.

Ms. Towtongie.

Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Netser.

Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Lightstone.

Ms. Angnakak.

Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Main, although he is not standing, we accept that.

>>*Laughter*

All those opposed, please stand and sit down when I call your name.

Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Kusugak.

Ms. Ehaloak.

Ms. Sheutiapik.

Mr. Joanasie.

Ms. Nakashuk.

Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Akeeagok.

Members, 11 voted in favour of the motion; 8 voted against. The motion is carried.

Motions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Motion 102 – 5(2): Extension of Review Period for Bill 54, An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) WHEREAS Bill 54, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act*, received second reading on October 22, 2020;

AND WHEREAS the bill has been referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation for consideration;

AND WHEREAS Rule 68(1) provides that a bill referred to a standing committee shall not be proceeded with until the Assembly receives the report of the committee or 120 calendar days pass from the day the bill was given second reading;

(interpretation) AND WHEREAS the standing committee has been giving careful consideration to the bill;

AND WHEREAS the standing committee requires additional time in which to complete its work;

NOW THEREFORE I MOVE, seconded by the Hon. Member for Hudson Bay, that the period of time for the standing committee to report (interpretation ends) Bill 54 (interpretation) back to the House be extended by a further 120 days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm the co-chair as our chair, John Main, cannot be here.

As Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I want to briefly state that the standing committee has been exchanging correspondence with the sponsoring minister on this bill. Members have been expressing concerns about the proposal and are not prepared to move forward at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. To the motion.

An Hon. Member: Question.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm actually very disappointed that I have to rise today to speak against the deferral of Bill 54, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act*.

Mr. Speaker, this Act does not change any existing practices; it just allows more flexibility upon Financial Management Board approval.

Mr. Speaker, the very first question period of this sitting focused on the setting of fuel prices for the new year. Members expressed their concern that new prices had not been set for the upcoming year. In fact I've had questions from constituents on this matter.

As the members know, we have had Bill 54 before the standing committee since the fall of 2020. Mr. Speaker, Bill 54 proposes to amend the legislation that regulates the purchase, inventory, distribution, and sale of petroleum products in Nunavut.

Our government has proposed amendments to give our fuel purchasing experts at the Petroleum Products Division a greater financial threshold with which to purchase fuel in any given year. The fuel we purchase at a given price in one year determines what the price to consumers will be in the following year. Mr. Speaker, the Revolving Fund from which these purchases are made is then paid back with the revenue it makes from the sale of fuel, a ratepayer-based system.

Mr. Speaker, we have requested that this House increase the Revolving Fund's limit by \$100 million this year to allow the Petroleum Products Division to purchase more fuel when prices are more favourable. COVID presented such an occasion last year. Global oil prices were at almost record low.

Mr. Speaker, while the Petroleum Products Division did buy as much fuel as it was allowed to under the current Act, if allowed a higher purchasing limit, it could have bought more will the prices were still very low. That is why we proposed these changes to the Act, because we want the ability to strike while the iron is hot. These situations do not arise too often in the global economic system. It's also why we opposed the members' desire to delay this bill any further.

Mr. Speaker, in previous communications I've had with the standing committee, I informed them in the fall that we estimate that we could have saved approximately \$32 million in fuel purchases if we had already had this increase in purchasing power. The delay since then from November in making these changes has meant that an additional approximate \$15 million was lost in savings.

An Hon. Member: Shame, shame!

Hon. George Hickes: Mr. Speaker, in addition to losing out on savings, it also impacts the pricing we set for consumers. Mr. Speaker, with the current structure in the way retail pricing is established here in Iqaluit, it is possible that Iqalummiut could be the most impacted with this delay.

Mr. Speaker, in order to set prices annually, the Petroleum Products Division has to forecast how much fuel is expected to be sold, the prices at which we purchase that fuel, operating costs for buying and distributing that fuel, and then sets consumer prices to offset those costs. Mr. Speaker, the Petroleum Products Division adjusts

these forecasts throughout the year and will announce fuel price adjustments as necessary.

Although this Revolving Fund works on a break-even basis, these forecasts vary throughout the year and could cause instability in fuel prices to consumers. That's why there's also a stabilization fund, which allows the Petroleum Products Division to carry a surplus or a deficit in any given year so long as it doesn't exceed \$10 million. Mr. Speaker, this means that if forecasts change, we don't have to immediately change the prices too.

The stabilization fund carried a small accumulated deficit in 2019-2020 and when we adjusted fuel prices in January 2020, we maintained a small deficit so that fuel prices would not drastically spike, with the understanding that prices at the time were trending down. Mr. Speaker, normally we were able to manage deficits in the stabilization fund over several years instead of fluctuating prices from one year over the next, but when COVID-19 hit across the world, it also impacted our fuel purchasing and pricing system.

As I had said earlier, oil prices bottomed out, opened up opportunities to create savings in our next purchasing cycles, which could then be passed along to balance out fuel costs that are used to repay the stabilization fund's deficit, but the impacts of COVID-19 also meant that we sold less fuel last year. That means we have less revenue to pay for the fuel we had already purchased. Mr. Speaker, this left our stabilization fund in an untenable deficit position of approximately \$18 million.

Mr. Speaker, we are required under current legislation to immediately bring our stabilization fund back into good standing. This can be done either by appropriating funds or a significant increase in fuel prices to consumers. As my colleague from Cambridge Bay said earlier this week, in light of the hardships Nunavummiut were facing due to COVID, it just wasn't appropriate or the right time to impose a fuel price hike just before Christmas and going into our coldest months and heating fuel usage and just to possibly lower the rates again in April.

Mr. Speaker, contrary to the Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak's suggestion to use COVID-related funding to offset fuel prices, we don't think diverting funds from the health and safety of Nunavummiut is appropriate either.

In the early days of Nunavut, the stabilization fund had a limit of \$5 million and \$55 million in purchasing power. Now we purchase over \$200 million in fuel annually. That is why we proposed a friendly amendment to Bill 54 to increase the stabilization fund's limit from plus or minus \$10 million to \$20 million so that we can recover these funds over a greater period of time.

Mr. Speaker, our government has provided the standing committee with more than adequate time to consider these amendments. As I have said earlier, we're missing out on opportunities to save money and creating ones that will cost Nunavummiut more. The cost of doing nothing is too great. I strongly urge members to refer Bill 54 to Committee of the Whole to be dealt with this sitting.

Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote on this motion. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) To the motion. (interpretation) I have no more names...
. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak to the motion. This motion is somewhat of a more difficult issue to discuss.

As was previously indicated by the Minister of Community and Government Services, Bill 54, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act*, and Bill 52, *Petroleum Products Commission Act*, are both extremely complex as well as interrelated. Mr. Speaker, both bills, as I mentioned, are very complex for a number of reasons.

Petroleum products and the way that it has been managed in the territory for the last 20 years is somewhat of a mystery and as indicated in Bill 54, the *Petroleum Products Commission Act*, has much room for improvement. However, both bills were introduced just mere months ago and I think it is unfair for the government to push this decision on us and expect us to pass these very complex and significant pieces of legislation without doing due diligence and reviewing and scrutinizing every clause within each of these pieces of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, the Petroleum Products Division itself, the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund, and the Petroleum Products Stabilization Fund are a mystery, to say the least. In fact, for the first time ever, an annual report of the Petroleum Products

Division was shared with a standing committee just recently, I believe, in 2019, the last time the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund was increased. We don't have much historical knowledge of the Petroleum Products Division and the Revolving Fund.

Pushing this legislation on us in October and as the minister indicated yesterday in response to oral questions, the proposed amendment was prepared and correspondence sent to the standing committee with the intent of full discussion during the Legislative Assembly as part of Bill 54 that had been deferred from the November sitting.

Mr. Speaker, the government introduced pieces of legislation in October and expected us to pass it in November. Mr. Speaker, that is unrealistic. Mr. Speaker, a few months have passed and a significant amount of correspondence has gone back and forth, but there are still a number of unknowns and expecting us to pass this legislation without full comprehension of the implications is irresponsible of the government.

The Minister of Justice had just indicated that by not passing this legislation, we are going to hurt the territory. Mr. Speaker, that is an unfair comment. Mr. Speaker, the minister had indicated that the stabilization fund is now in deficit of \$18 million, in excess of the \$10 million allowance. Mr. Speaker, that is not our fault. That is not the fault of the Standing Committee on Legislation.

As the minister had indicated, the PPD is accountable for creating fuel

consumption forecasts and purchasing fuel based on those forecasts, and is also responsible for setting price adjustments as necessary, and I emphasize "as necessary." Mr. Speaker, it's still unknown why the Petroleum Products Stabilization Fund is in a deficit position of \$18 million when the government is responsible for setting fuel prices to ensure that the Petroleum Products Division and its role is conducted at a break-even point.

Mr. Speaker, I still don't understand how that's possible, but as I mentioned, the Petroleum Products Division seems to be somewhat of a mystery. It is shrouded in unknowns and that is something that definitely needs to be changed in Bill 52, the Petroleum Products Commission Act, and I look forward to further review of that piece of legislation and the improvements that it is going to make, and I hope to see increased transparency through that piece of legislation, but at the current moment there is insufficient information to provide us, the Standing Committee on Legislation, confidence in Bill 54, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act*.

Lastly, as I previously indicated, the *Revolving Funds Act*, the Petroleum Products Revolving Fund was amended by this Assembly through Bill 21, which was introduced and passed in the winter sitting of 2019, just two years ago.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I think it is extremely irresponsible of the government to put the Standing Committee on Legislation in this position and expect us to pass it without doing our job and reviewing this legislation and all the clauses within it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) To the motion. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, I don't have a whole lot of rhetoric regarding this motion today, nonetheless, I completely concur with my colleagues' statements, both Mr. Lightstone and Ms. Towtongie as I agreed with their assessments.

Ms. Towtongie's commentary spoke towards ensuring the work is done correctly, and in order to do that, the standing committee would require further time to conduct their work. We are insisting on a properly conducted review as we constitute the standing committee, and we have no desire to play around with finances and with respect to this proposal submitted by our government, which has a stated goal of \$100 million, perhaps we can all agree that we should not flout the amounts of funds they are expecting, as it is a rather large pot of funding.

Mr. Speaker, our government's Petroleum Products Division needs to understand that more succinctly, as better monitoring is also required, and to work more transparently in a manner visible to everyone, at least in my opinion, within government operations, it should be clear both to regular MLAs as well as to regular Nunavummiut where they can clearly understand what is being undertaken.

Mr. Speaker, lastly, we keep hearing the references to the \$32 million fund, that

\$32 million would have been saved if we had purchased the fuel at a lower price, and although we keep hearing that same refrain, and in perusing this mention of the savings, we have tried to conduct more research into this amount by asking our own government, what kind of accounting wizardry was done to come up with this phantom \$32 million fund and where is this stemming from?

We wanted to understand the reasoning or business case substantiating this amount that was constantly being thrown around, like a threat. We wanted to know how this amount was arrived at, such as buying x-number of litres at such and such a price resulting in transportation costs due to it being bought at such and such a place showing how this \$32 million was arrived at. I personally have never quite understood yet where and how this figure came about.

Although correspondence has flown back and forth, we have never seen the actual (interpretation ends) calculations (interpretation) substantiating this amount yet, and as to where it originated from, we have yet to find out. Due to that reason, perhaps government is stuck trying to argue only that it will be cheaper or alternatively could increase based on several factors.

We must also always look at every situation using this outlook, to say it in English (interpretation ends) best case scenario or worst-case scenario (interpretation) as the Standing Committee member must examine both scenarios in our role.

Mr. Speaker, I have run out of comments for the time being, but I shall vote in

support of the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. To the motion. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a short commentary to offer here. Ever since Nunavut's creation, the division or the PPD has always ordered our fuel every year, which usually arrived every fall to our communities.

Once the entire fuel shipment supplies had landed in every community, usually around the month of December just prior to Christmas, where we would anticipate either a decrease or an increase in fuel prices and we would be notified at that same time annually. That was the usual practice to announce that in December, but now it seems that practice has gone out the window, as my constituents were waiting this year around December to see if fuel prices would be announced, and they would query us, "When will the fuel price be fixed?" They wondered if this price would be set.

Many constituents were expecting some sort of announcement. However, if members do not approve a supplementary appropriation bill, then we find out that it will not be done in this manner, as officials have quickly pointed out. Yesterday, when I was querying the Minister of CGS about the reasoning behind why the government incurred such a large deficit, he responded that this is due to the inability of residents to pay off their arrears that we have arrived at this situation.

There seems to be a lot of deflection as we are not capable of understanding the

reasons why, Mr. Speaker, we wish to be completely clear in our understanding prior to approval, although we support this government, we members on this side, must still hold the government accountable and we will not approve any additional funding if the reasoning is not clear.

We constantly hear from our constituents to harden our stances and to ensure that every project is agreed to properly without any pre-approvals by members to the government. When we watch the proceedings, members seem only to rubberstamp the proposals. They want us to be highly critical this time around for every project, right, members?

Mr. Speaker, we are also only following our constituents' wishes, so I will also be supporting this motion. Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. To the motion. I have no more names, but I would like to indicate that (interpretation ends) a recorded vote has been requested. All those in favour, please stand and sit down when I call your name.

Ms. Towtongie.

Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Netser.

Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Lightstone.

Ms. Angnakak.

Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Main.

Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Qamaniq.

All those opposed, please stand and sit down when I call your name.

Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Akeegok.

Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Kusugak.

Ms. Ehaloak.

Ms. Sheutiapik.

Mr. Joanasie.

Ms. Nakashuk.

(interpretation) Colleagues, there are 11 votes in favour of the motion and 8 votes against the motion. The motion is carried.

(interpretation ends) Motions.
(interpretation) Item 18. First Reading of Bills. Item 19. Second Reading of Bills.
(interpretation ends) Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Item 19: Second Reading of Bills

Bill 60 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2020-2021 – Second Reading

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My paper is out of order here.

>> *Laughter*

My sincere apologies, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Arviat South that Bill 60, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 2, 2020-2021*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations to defray the operations and maintenance expenses of the Government of Nunavut for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 60 is referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Bill 61 – Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 2, 2020-2021 – Second Reading

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Arviat South that Bill 61, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 2, 2020-2021*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill makes supplementary appropriations to defray capital expenditures of the Government of Nunavut for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The motion is in order. To the principle of the bill. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 61 is referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Justice, Mr. Hickes.

Bill 62 – An Act to Amend the Judicature Act – Second Reading

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the hon. member for Pangnirtung that Bill 62, *An Act to Amend the Judicature Act*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the *Judicature Act* by clarifying the regulation-making power of the Commissioner with respect to fees, allowances, and remuneration payable. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 62 is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. Akeeagok.

Bill 63 – An Act to Amend the Traffic Safety Act – Second Reading

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 63, *An Act to Amend the Traffic Safety Act*, be read for the second time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

This bill amends the *Traffic Safety Act* to provide municipal corporations with the authority to prosecute all *Traffic Safety Act* offences, to collect fines and surcharges, and to update the regulation-making authority of the minister with respect to school buses, demerit points, and other matters or activity subject to the Act. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

An Hon. Member: Question.

Speaker (interpretation): All those in favour. All those opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 63 can now be referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

(interpretation ends) First Reading of Bills. Minister responsible for the Business Credit Corporation, Mr. Akeeagok.

Bill 64 – An Act to Amend the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation Act – Second Reading

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 64, *An Act to Amend the Nunavut Business Credit Corporation Act*, be read for the second time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the *Nunavut Business Credit Corporation Act* to increase the limit on the aggregate on the principal on the amount of loans, bonds, guaranteed loans, or indemnified bonds made to or in respect of one business enterprise and any related business enterprise from \$1 million to \$2 million. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 64 is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Sheutiapik.

Bill 65 – Apprenticeship and Certification Act – Second Reading

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for South Baffin, that Bill 65, *Apprenticeship and Certification Act*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides for the registration of apprentices and trainees and the certification of journeypersons, skilled trades workers, and persons working in designated occupations. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

Speaker (interpretation): All those in favour. All those opposed. (interpretation ends) The motion is carried and Bill 65 is referred to the Standing Committee on Legislation.

Second Reading of Bills. (interpretation) No. 20. (interpretation ends) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bills 59, 60, and 61 with Mr. Rumbolt in the Chair.

Before we proceed with the Committee of the Whole, we will take a 20-minute break.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>House recessed at 15:55 and Committee resumed at 16:22

Item 20: 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 59, 60, and 61. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to continue with the review of the 2021-22 Main Estimates for the Department of Health and, if time permits, we will commence the review

of the Department of Community and Government Services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 59?

Some Members: Agreed.

Bill 59 – Appropriation (Operations & Maintenance) Act, 2021-2022 – Health – Consideration in Committee

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Does the committee agree to let the witnesses appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, to my left is Deputy Minister Ruby Brown and to my right, Executive Director of Corporate Services Mr. Greg Babstock. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak, and welcome. We left off yesterday on page H-4 with Health, Directorate, and I had two more names on my list for questioning and I'm going

to use my discretion and end the debate on H-4 with these two members. With that, I will start with Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, minister and to your colleagues there.

On the subject of mental health and I guess it would fall under HR development planning under the Directorate, there are a lot of issues now with mental health and I'm thinking more about the youth and the suicides and the attempted suicides, just the sheer number of them that have been happening in the last little while.

Is your department planning on looking at thinking outside the box, instead of doing like 8:30 to 5, for these mental health workers or counsellors to go out in the evenings and have some deal with outreach patients, maybe, or youth or counselling services? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Simailak. I would like to remind you that your pen is working; we can hear it clicking through the microphone.

>> *Laughter*

Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering what that sound was.

Mr. Chairman, yes, we do have our mental health workers; they are on call and they do work after-hours. If there are people out there who need support, we encourage them to contact the mental

health services. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Try to make sure everyone was awake here.

>> *Laughter*

What I am trying to get at is looking at changing some of the hours so that maybe they can do shift work from 3 to midnight or something so that they're out and about at the arenas or drop-in centres or even at their office, so that it's not so public in the daytime. You've got some of these youth that have serious issues and I do know some of them want to reach out for help, but it's also "that look" that they are there during the day, that they're not in school, that they're somewhere else during the day. Where is she? Where is he? Then all of the rumours come out.

I am just trying to think of ways to make it easier for some of these people, youth and even adults that might not want to leave work, or let's say they're working at the Northern. They need their hours because they're not making much money. I'm just thinking: are there any thoughts about changing some of your hours to shift work hours? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our Department of Health is always looking for innovative ways and different ways of dealing with many

different issues such as mental wellness and reaching out to the clients and possible clients. I'm sure we'll take some of Mr. Simailak's ideas into consideration and include them in those discussions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. The other person's name on my list is not here, so we will move on. We are on page H-4, Health. Directorate. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$59,403,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Moving on page H-5. Public Health. Any questions on Public Health? Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Good afternoon. I guess this is kind of related to the question I asked yesterday about the health board. But here we have health committees of council, and that's under Public Health. Under summary of grants and contributions on page H-7 they have, I guess it's gone up by...anyhow, \$250,000. I am wondering: how well is that working? What kind of information is coming back to the department from these health committees of council? I think they operate with a couple people on the council, I am not too sure; if you could elaborate a little bit about how that all works. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is a grant that we give out, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Yes, I know. I guess I wasn't clear enough. It's under H-7. It does say summary of grants and contributions under Public Health. You have the Health Committees of Council \$250 000 is given, I believe. I don't know if that's to each hamlet council, or how does this work? I'm just trying to get a better idea on how this whole council works. Oh, I better slow down. Sorry, interpreters. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could; through you, to have Mr. Babstock respond to that question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Babstock, please go ahead.

Mr. Babstock: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We will have to come back to you with some more information on that, to get the exact details around it. As a grant, there's a little bit of a different reporting responsibility rather than a contribution. There is a bit of a difference, but we would be happy to provide you with what information we can about the utilizations of those funds that we can pull together. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Yes, it would be good to see how that all works and what kind of information that you're getting back, and how you're using that

information. There's a definite need, in my opinion, to have connections in at the community level. I think that's important.

In regard to cannabis, it was, as we all know, legalized across Canada. What kind of programming has the department implemented to address the impacts of cannabis use across Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a very good question. If I could have my deputy respond to that question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for that question. In terms of the actions taken around cannabis, there's considerable education that's done in the schools and in the communities as well. It is linked up to tobacco. There is monitoring of the use, we're working closely with the Department of Finance on some of this work. There is ongoing education and information that goes out to the public. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When you say "we"... I guess the department, do you have people that travel around to different communities, or do you hire somebody within every community and that's their job? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Ms. Brown continue with that response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for that question. There are staff at headquarters here in Iqaluit who develop the programming, the education materials, and they reach out to the community health centres, the community outreach workers, community health representatives to disseminate and train and provide them with that information. It's not just segregated to certain people, in some extent it is because those are the people pulling the information together. It's really everybody's job out in the health system to be informing and educating. Thank you for that.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Just one more question in regard to this. I'm just curious as to how it's delivered. I know you said the health centre and nurses, but is it like a classroom setting or is it one on one? How does this happen? I know you said you're going to the schools. Perhaps in the classroom you're doing a presentation, but non-school age population, do they get this kind of training as well, and if they do, is it one on one? How do you carry that out? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that it's an all-encompassing, depending on the

situations. I'll have Ms. Brown elaborate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for that question. It depends, community by community, and what the needs are that are identified by the community, and what the health staff are seeing and the education staff are seeing. I don't have the specific details on exactly what are the programs at the local level by community, but we can get that information for you. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again on H-7, summary of grants and contributions under public health, we have cancer screening of \$266,000, and I'm wondering: how will these funds be allocated and what types of cancers are you going to screen for? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have my deputy respond to those details, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for that question. As far as colorectal screening goes, there's considerable work that we have done with our national partners, like the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, and in fact we sit on their board and they have helped us to get to this phase to do a lot of the background work. We're asking for three PYs and

they will be looking to start the screening program and they will start with colorectal, but as those PYs get trained and we put information systems in place to gather data and track people, then those positions will also then go on to do cervical screening and breast screening next in terms of the progression of this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Brown. Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you. Just for clarification, I guess, these screenings for these cancers, is that going to be across Nunavut or is that just in the bigger centres? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My understanding is that it will be everywhere, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser: Oh, I'm sorry; I'm pressing the button.

Welcome back, minister. I've just got one question, I believe. (interpretation) Well, it is one question. (interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman, I was really happy to hear the minister's statement today on the safe sober drop-in that the Department of Health is working with the Municipality of Pangnirtung, and I applaud the department for working with the community. This is what we really want to see.

Can the minister describe how we can get our communities to do the same thing with the Department of Health? It's really needed in our communities and it's a way for our youth to get back into a meaningful lifestyle by having programs like these. I wonder: can the minister explain to us how these other communities can secure this type of funding? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In Pangnirtung it was very great to see the pilot project rolling along. When there's an initiative in a community, a similar program perhaps, if there is willingness and initiative, we can work closely with them as the health department. In collaboration with other organizations, we would be able to work towards what a community wants. Based on that knowledge, we can initiate immediately to arrive at their desired ends. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister. In regards to a drop-in centre, would the minister be able to provide information to my constituents so that they can gain further insight as to what is available and what is needed? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would

absolutely be able to provide you that information about that facility or perhaps when a proposal is made requesting assistance on a certain project that they wish to initiate in their community, that can come from our community and if I get correspondence requesting that support, then that is another avenue to undertake to get things moving. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How much funding will you be able to set aside for the communities that may request funding? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That would vary based on the individual needs of a specific community, so we cannot specifically say how much funding we can provide without knowing the details of which community is applying, and for what program they want to access.

Different communities have different needs, and these would be identified over time through a collaborative effort. Moving forward, I cannot state specifically how much they would receive, but I can say that there will be funding made available as we move forward.

On an annual basis, under Health, we have funds put aside in the amount of \$7.4 million. It is clear that this funding will come from within this amount, but I just cannot say how much specifically

we will be able to provide at the moment. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister. Has this program been running for a while or has it only recently been up and running? This is the first time that I have heard of it personally. \$7.4 million seems to be a big amount, and I am pleased to hear that this money is earmarked for the program, but I would like to know; has this program been on for a while now? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a recently developed initiative. I think it's been on for a year now, not over a year. It's a recent initiative program. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser: Just a comment, Mr. Chairman. I think this is an exciting opportunity for the hamlets to get involved in this type of activity, in conjunction with the Department of Health. I applaud the department and the minister for coming out with a program which will start in Pangnirtung. I'm sure that there will be a lot of applications submitted to the department. I applaud the minister and his department for coming out with a program.

(interpretation) Thank you very much.

Chairman: Thank you for your comment. Mr. Main. You have a question?

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Have a good afternoon, minister. (interpretation ends) On public health, I'm looking at the business plan and of course last year's business plan, we did not anticipate the pandemic and nobody did. We didn't know that it was coming. I see a list of COVID-19 related actions that are listed in the business plan on page 153, and I really appreciate all the hard work that your public health team and all your other staff have put in during the pandemic.

When you look at the public health team and you look at the people working within that area, what is the department doing to make sure that they're not getting burned out, to make sure that the employee wellness and retention side of things is not getting left behind? It's a very stressful time for many staff, understandably. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Some minor renovations, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, that's a very good question and I really appreciate and I know that the department appreciates the concern from our colleague and all my colleagues in this room for the health care and well-being of all the staff in Health.

This COVID has been very stressful in all levels throughout our department, and for the frontline workers and the COVID

team, there have been rotations that are taking place. I'll use your community of Arviat for example. We have to rotate the team that is in Arviat so that there is no burnout. Even at that, it's very stressful, but we are rotating staff and ensuring that they do go away from the hotspot, if I may use the term loosely, Mr. Chairman, and get a break. We are doing that and we, we being the team, are in constant communication to ensure that proper care is being given to the caregivers, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Has the department been tracking how many health staff have been directly affected by COVID-19 in terms of how many of your staff have had to take time off to recover?

I'm not making any insinuations or allegations about workplace environment; I'm just wondering in terms of being directly in harm's way. Is the department tracking how many health staff have been infected with COVID-19? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We don't have that statistic with us and I don't know if we would be able to get that detail and, if we did, if we would be able to share it in terms of how many staff have been infected with it. At this point I don't have that information, but we are in communication with the staff to ensure

that they are not being overly stressed and that they're in good health to be able to take care of those that are in need, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) On page 153 under COVID-19 related actions in regard to testing it says, "Develop a territory-wide COVID-19 testing approach that factors in new testing technologies and capabilities and focuses on reducing testing turnaround times."

We have the swab planes, as we call them here in Arviat. Unfortunately they have been a daily sight in the good weather times, flying over the community, flying swabs either to Rankin Inlet or to Iqaluit. Those are, I believe, using the BioFire devices located in Rankin Inlet and Iqaluit.

Is that the extent of the testing approach or is the department planning on expanding, acquiring new equipment or procedures to further reduce the turnaround times for testing?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The two sites currently are using those to test. If there's anybody in any of the communities across Nunavut that may have symptoms of COVID, if they're coughing or what have you, tests are being done and those samples are being sent to one of the two locations and dealt with through that, but I

understand that that program will be evolving and maybe through you, Mr. Chairman, Ms. Brown could elaborate a bit on where we're going with that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for that question. The GeneXpert and BioFire are currently being used in Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet, and those are the two most reliable tests that we have in Canada as of now. However, as new devices come into production and they're approved by Health Canada, we are a part of the national committee that's looking to see how we can adapt them to different situations.

Going forward, there's a device called Abbott ID NOW and that will be deployed to Arviat and Gjoa Haven, Igloolik, Sanikiluaq, and Cambridge Bay because those are the communities that, based on the travel routes and everything, could use that machine. It is less reliable than the ones in Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet. Even with that device, you still have to have confirmation by sending them to Iqaluit and Rankin Inlet.

As for your information and awareness, our turnaround times in Nunavut are less than 36 hours to get results on the tests. In other jurisdictions throughout Canada the average time is between five and six days. We're feeling like we're on top of it.

Apart from Abbott ID NOW, there's a new device called Abbott Panbio, which is even less reliable than Abbott ID, but we're looking to see how we can use that device as well in the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Brown. Before I go back to Mr. Main, I have a quick question. When it comes to sampling for COVID currently, are you collecting any samples from other communities now for COVID-19 or you're only collecting samples from Arviat? I'm just wondering how widespread the sampling is being done throughout Nunavut. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that if there are any persons in Nunavut that are exhibiting any COVID symptoms, runny nose or flu-like symptoms and others, they are getting sampled in the community and then those samples are being sent to Iqaluit or to Rankin Inlet. It could be from any community across the territory. If they have flu-like symptoms and they report to the health centre in that community, they're being tested and being forwarded to the two locations, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you for asking that question. Maybe I'll follow up on your question, Mr. Chairman.

In terms of surveillance testing, I believe it's called surveillance testing, testing in communities where there's no confirmed cases of COVID, does the department have any benchmarks or targets that it tries to meet? I'll use for example the community of a thousand people. Are there a number of swabs or samples that you want to see coming out of that community every month in order to try to make sure that you are staying on top of the surveillance testing or is it simply

a community-by-community approach? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's based on whether any Nunavummiuq has any flu-like symptoms. They are tested, Mr. Chairman. It's not based on community size, location, or population. If there's anybody out there that has any COVID symptoms or flu-like symptoms that warrant a sample, then they are tested and those samples then are forwarded. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I have one more question on the testing and then I will move on. These Abbott ID devices or the other one, the Abbott devices, are they nasal swabs or are they throat swabs? The reason I ask is that the nasal swab can be quite painful for some people and I have heard directly from constituents that people get shy or they get hesitant to get tested again due to the pain that they may associate with it. That's why I'm asking that question. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That's a good question. Unfortunately we don't have the answer to that. When we do get that answer, I'll

be more than happy to share it with my colleagues, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) On page 153 it mentions the public health orders that were enacted and it mentions that this was done in partnership with the Department of Justice. With regard to enforcing these public health orders, did the Department of Health work with the Department of Justice on instructing RCMP officers or training them on how to enforce public health measures where they're given directives or instructions as to how to go about enforcing these public health orders? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In terms of dealing with this issue, our Department of Health has worked and talked with the Department of Justice and other stakeholders in this COVID pandemic team to find ways to deal with that part of the team. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Hickey. Before we move on, I will have to pause because we do not have quorum at this time.

An Hon. Member: Yes, we do.

Chairman: No, we don't.

>>Committee recessed at 16:59 and resumed at 17:02

Chairman: Sorry about that, members. We will now continue on with the meeting. We left off where the minister answered Mr. Main's question, so we will go back to Mr. Main. Mr. Main, please go ahead.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Yes, so I was asking about enforcement and so I wonder if the minister could explain how many or elaborate on how many fines, tickets, or other enforcement actions have been taken across Nunavut? I'm not just asking about Arviat or Whale Cove; I'm looking at the whole territory and the public health orders that were put in place. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Unfortunately I can't respond to that because I'm not in charge of the enforcement part of it and on that issue, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I was waiting for a red light to come on somewhere.

The Department of Justice would have that information, and so am I correct to assume that I should ask those questions to the Department of Justice? I'm a bit surprised that the Department of Health wouldn't be tracking enforcement action taken under the public health orders, but maybe just a clarification on that, please.

(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, I believe the COVID Response Secretariat would be responsible for answering that through Intergovernmental Affairs, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) I will request that information.

Moving on away from COVID for now, on addressing tuberculosis, I know that before COVID, this was one of the big public health challenges in Nunavut. What has been the effect or what has been the progress made in the last year in terms of combatting tuberculosis, and has the department gotten any further funding support from Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, which I believe was sitting on a pile of money supposed to be going towards tuberculosis reduction? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That work continues and up to now, I believe we have received \$2.5 million on that file. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. Mr. Main, just a reminder that your clock is at 52 seconds. I know you

can't see it, so I just want to remind you of that. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) For the year ahead, when we look at tuberculosis reduction work, do you have any plans for screening clinics? Do you have communities that will be targeted? What is the plan in terms of TB work, if that is continuing uninterrupted? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We're continuing to do follow-up with the current communities where we're doing the TB clinics, but we don't have any planned upcoming in this year to do other communities at this time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I have no further questions on this page. (interpretation) That's it.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I should turn to the mic. Sorry. I was going to read off the binder here.

On page 152 of your business plan under the subject of health protection, you've got environmental health officers. How many officers do we have in Nunavut? They're not in every community. Which

communities have them? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, we do have environmental health officers within our department, but at this time I don't have the exact total of how many environmental health officers we have and where they are located at this time. I would be more than happy to share it with the members when it does become available. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister, for the commitment there. Along the same lines of my question again, this one is under population health. I know that in Baker Lake we have some mental health workers and there are some that are being mentored, I believe, but if I understood correctly, they're casual. I don't know if you have it on hand, but how many are casual and how many are indeterminate for these types of workers, and is there a plan in place to make them indeterminate?

This falls under mental wellness under the population health category. It's on page 153 at the very top. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Again, I don't have the details in terms of how many they are, where they are, and if they're

indeterminate or not. We'll work on gathering that information for my colleague, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just a quick question on page 153. Could I ask a question on that page? Thank you.

In priorities, it says to priorities 2021-22 says continue to implement education upgrade program to support an increase in the Inuit health workforce across Nunavut. (interpretation) I know they teach Inuit in nursing degrees. I am always very happy to see people learning to become nurses. The Makigiaqta funds handle a lot of money. The Makigiaqta Corporation, they use a lot of money and I know that they could do more if they had more funding. They could provide more programs, but they have limited funds. Now, has the Makigiaqta group ever requested more money? For example, has Makigiaqta been involved in call letters? They show you where you can request money from us. Does the Department of Health apply for funds from that place? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Department of Health wants to train Inuit to become health care workers so that they can help their fellow Inuit. It's always better to have a fellow Inuk checking you out and they're more believable. We look for money that's available out there, and if we get approval, then we can train more Inuit to

become health care workers. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now, I wonder if the Makigiaqta group under Nunavut Tunngavik, as they own this corporation and it is holding a large amount of funds entrusted to it specifically for training Inuit, as they need to help Inuit, and if their leadership is listening, you have to provide this funding. Has the Department of Health requested any funding from the Makigiaqta Corporation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated holds that fund, specifically to provide funding for training to help raise capacity, as the Makigiaqta Rehabilitation Centre has received funding from that body and they have provided assistance to that program. That is one area or body I can use as an example. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) What about the assistance specifically for the trainees, as they are already working but also undertaking this training and they are using funds, so I wonder if this funding is also supported by the Makigiaqta Corporation? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can make this information available to our colleague where we receive our funding from and I believe it would be useful to provide that information so that it is reviewed by members, especially where we receive funding assistance from, for our various programs such as in the training sector provided to Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. We are on page H-4. Public Health. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. H-5. Thank you for the correction. Page H-5. Public Health. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$25,045,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. I ask members to go to page H-6. Health Care Services. Are there questions on this page? Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have two questions, and it's with regard to mental health services. They are in high demand across Nunavut, so how is the department working with Nunavut Arctic College to recruit and train Nunavummiut into the mental health field? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is the wish of our department to increase and include as many Nunavummiut in working in all aspects of the health field, including

mental health. We do have discussions with different key players and partners in terms of finding ways that we could deliver programs such as mental health worker training programs that may be accessible to Nunavummiut. That includes discussions with the college. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My final question to the minister, and thank you for your response. I'm curious as to what additional mental health service and supports have been in place to address issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My final question.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have had an increase in calls for mental health support across Nunavut because of this pandemic. We've had to increase support with some of our clients that are in the isolation hubs, for example. We've had to get more support with the different kinds of stresses and pressures that have been caused because of this issue. If I could have Ms. Brown elaborate on some of those details. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for that question. For mental health services in territory, because we had to reduce the number of face-to-face interaction, virtual health by telehealth was

increased substantially. As well, reaching out proactively to those who are mental health clients to see if they're okay or not, and to provide counselling was also implemented.

As far as the supports for people in the isolation hubs, there are mental health nurses there, there are social workers, there are two in every hotel hub, and the Kamatsiaqtut Help Line is in place, Northern Counselling Therapeutic Services are in place, there are in-person assessments, counselling services and crisis intervention that's provided.

There's the wellness team in the hubs, also liaises with in-territory staff so when people are coming back, that there's continuity of care, assessments that's provided in English, French and Inuktitut. There is also counselling available while the clients are in isolation on family violence and resiliency, and things like that so there is quite a few things actually that are in place. I could go on, but I will stop there. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Brown. Before I go to Mr. Main, I will ask a quick question.

Back in the previous Assembly, the minister of the day talked about the possibility of staggering hours at the health centres and continued into the evening a bit to accommodate patients that could not attend the health centre during the day, and at the time, he talked about... . It was before the union. They were having talks with the union whether it was possible or not.

Can the minister update us today on whether this is still in the talks, or if it

has just fallen to the wayside? Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those same issues continue today unfortunately, Mr. Chairman and in talks with the union and the collection fees, we cannot go much further than where we are at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Okay. Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) There is a 10, close to \$11 million increase for mental health and addictions treatment in this budget. I wonder if the minister can explain where that money will be going and specifically for what types of services delivered where. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The increases ride in line with the mental health and addiction services contracts that we have. \$5 million with Qikiqtani region, Kivalliq has \$3.6 million in contracts, and the Kitikmeot \$2 million, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Thank you, minister, for the regional breakdown, but I guess I will rephrase my question. What new mental health and addictions programs and services will be provided and how will they be

delivered? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Ms. Brown respond to that question, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brown.

Ms. Brown: Thank you for that question. Large portion of that increase is going to out-of-territory services for placement of people with severe mental health and addictions issues and that is... the numbers have increased and so it is for that purpose. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Akoak.

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since we are barely keeping quorum, I move a motion to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. The motion is not debatable. All those in favour. Opposed. Motion is carried. I will now rise to report progress to the Speaker. Sergeant-at-Arms, if you could please escort the witnesses out.

Deputy Speaker (Mr. Rumbolt): Good afternoon, members. As the Speaker is not available to continue this afternoon, as Deputy Speaker, I take over for a few minutes to finish off the day.

Item 21. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Akoak.

Item 21: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Akoak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bill 59 and would like to report progress. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Akoak. There is a motion on the floor to report progress. Is there a seconder? Minister Kusugak. Thank you. The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. Motion carried.

Item 22. Third Reading of Bills. Being none, Item 23. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Clerk.

Item 23: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): ...(no audio)...
Orders of the Day for February 26:

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

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

14. Tabling of Documents

15. Notices of Motions

16. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills

17. Motions

- Motion 103 – 5(2)
- Motion 104 – 5(2)

18. First Reading of Bills

19. Second Reading of Bills

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

- Bill 59
- Bill 60
- Bill 61

21. Report of the Committee of the Whole

22. Third Reading of Bills

23. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Clerk. This House stands adjourned until Friday, February 26, at 9 a.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 17:31*

