

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Tony Akoak
(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeegok
(Quttiktuq)

*Minister of Environment; Minister of Economic
Development and Transportation; Minister of Energy;
Minister of Justice; Minister responsible for Labour*

Joelie Kaernerck
(Amittuq)

Mary Killiktee
(Uqqummiut)

Karen Nutarak
(Tununiq)

Daniel Qavvik
(Hudson Bay)

Hon. P.J. Akeegok
(Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu)

*Premier; Minister of Executive and Intergovernmental
Affairs; Minister responsible for Immigration; Minister
responsible for Indigenous Affairs; Minister responsible
for the Qulliq Energy Corporation; Minister
responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council*

Hon. Lorne Kusugak
(Rankin Inlet South)

*Minister of Finance, Chair of the Financial
Management Board; Minister responsible for the
Nunavut Housing Corporation*

Hon. Joanna Quassa
(Aggu)

*Minister of Culture and Heritage;
Minister of Languages; Minister
responsible for Seniors*

Adam Lightstone
(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

Inagayuk Quqqiaq
(Netsilik)

Bobby Anavilok
(Kugluktuk)

Hon. John Main
(Arviat North-Whale Cove)
*Minister of Health; Minister responsible for
Suicide Prevention*

Alexander Sammurtok
(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield
Inlet)

Janet Brewster
(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

Solomon Malliki
(Aivilik)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

Joe Savikataaq
(Arviat South)
*Deputy Chair, Committee of the
Whole*

Hon. Pamela Gross
(Cambridge Bay)

*Deputy Premier; Minister of Education; Minister
responsible for Nunavut Arctic College*

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(Pangnirtung)

*Minister of Family Services; Minister responsible
for Homelessness; Minister of Human Resources;
Minister responsible for the Status of Women;
Minister responsible for the Workers' Safety and
Compensation Commission*

Craig Simailak
(Baker Lake)

George Hickes
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Hansard Production
Innirvik Support Services

Box 1200

Iqaluit, Nunavut, X0A 0H0

Tel (867) 975-5000 Fax (867) 975-5190 Toll-Free (877) 334-7266

Website: www.assembly.nu.ca

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Tuesday, March 14, 2023

Members Present:

Hon. David Akeeagok, Hon. P.J. Akeeagok, Hon. Tony Akoak, Mr. Bobby Anavilok, Ms. Janet Brewster, Hon. Pamela Gross, Mr. George Hickes, Hon. David Joanasie, Mr. Joelle Kaerner, Ms. Mary Killiktee, Hon. Lorne Kusugak, Mr. Adam Lightstone, Hon. John Main, Mr. Solomon Malliki, Hon. Margaret Nakashuk, Ms. Karen Nutarak, Mr. Daniel Qavvik, Hon. Joanna Quassa, Mr. Inagayuk Quqqiaq, Mr. Alexander Sammurtok, Mr. Joe Savikataaq, Mr. Craig Simailak.

>>*House commenced at 9:59*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak)(interpretation): Good morning. Before we proceed, Mr. Simailak, can you say the opening prayer, please.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Today is our last sitting day, which I am grateful for.

I would like to announce that our thoughts are with our colleague who is here with us today. Our thoughts are with our colleague and we extend our condolences. I hope that our colleague can find some sense of peace today.

(interpretation ends) Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 209 – 6(2): Working with the CNDEA to Build DEA Capacity

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. Good day, Nunavummiut, fellow colleagues, and those here with us today. My heart goes out to our colleague.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to inform members today of the Department of Education's renewed relationship with the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities, or the CNDEA.

The revised *Education Act*, passed in 2020, increased the responsibilities of the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities, and in turn, the Department of Education is working closely with the coalition to support their new staffing and funding needs.

The amended *Education Act* requires the coalition to support district education authorities in various ways, including providing training, assisting the development of school improvement plans and the district education authority teacher orientation. The Coalition

of Nunavut District Education Authorities also has increased responsibilities related to consultation with the department and production of an annual report.

In 2022 the department increased its funding to the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities to over \$3 million, which has allowed them to establish a new office site in Iqaluit, offer various training opportunities for district education authority office managers, and travel to engage communities on language of instruction in schools. The funding will also allow for the eventual hiring of 13 new coalition employees.

To solidify our renewed relationship and our shared goal of supporting district education authorities to be strong, functioning community representatives for education, the department and the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities signed a new memorandum of understanding in November 2022.

Mr. Speaker, strengthening capacity within the Coalition of Nunavut District Education Authorities means strengthening the role and capacity of our district education authorities and communities to ensure their active involvement in the education system. I look forward to continuing our renewed relationship. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Minister's Statement 210 – 6(2): World Tuberculosis Day

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I extend my condolences to our colleague.

Mr. Speaker, March 24 is World Tuberculosis Day, or World TB Day, and this year's theme is "Yes! We Can End TB." The Government of Nunavut, working with our partners, Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Government of Canada, is committed to ending tuberculosis in the territory.

(interpretation ends) Tuberculosis continues to be a serious problem in Nunavut. For most Canadians, the risk of developing TB is very low. However, the reported rate of active tuberculosis among Inuit in Inuit Nunangat was over 300 times the rate of Canadian-born non-indigenous people in 2016.

The Government of Nunavut is actively working toward fulfilling its responsibilities toward eliminating tuberculosis. Late last year, Health signed an information sharing agreement with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated to help strengthen our important working relationship on the issue of TB. Ending tuberculosis requires a cross-governmental approach because the root issues go beyond just health care. Four of the five actions in the *Katujjiluta* mandate directly support the elimination of tuberculosis. These are:

- Expanding the housing continuum; Enabling health and healing; Reinvesting in education; and Diversifying our local economies.

Nunavummiut can also help to end tuberculosis. One thing we can all do is to know the facts about TB. Tuberculosis is an infectious disease spread through the air by coughing, sneezing, singing, or talking. It can be ‘active’ in terms of being contagious to others or ‘sleeping’ and not being contagious.

Another action Nunavummiut can all take is to avoid judgment and not negatively target people with tuberculosis. TB-associated stigma is real and has harmful consequences for those needing treatment or testing.

It is important if you have TB symptoms like a persistent cough or night sweats, or if you’re a close contact of someone with TB, to contact your health care provider to get a test.

Working together, we can all help achieve a tuberculosis-free Nunavut. (interpretation)
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers’ Statements. Hon. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Minister’s Statement 211 – 6(2): NHC’s Support of the Tobacco and Smoking Act

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I sympathize with my colleague today during this difficult time.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform you of the steps the Nunavut Housing Corporation is taking to support the *Tobacco and Smoking Act*. The negative impacts of smoking and second-hand smoke on our health are well known, and the Nunavut Housing Corporation is committed to providing healthy and safe accommodations to Nunavummiut. In accordance with our responsibilities under the *Tobacco and Smoking Act*, the Nunavut Housing Corporation is making all housing units under its management non-smoking units.

>>Applause

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, as you may know, the *Tobacco and Smoking Act* will be coming into force on May 31, 2023 to coincide with World No Tobacco Day. As of May 31, 2023, all public housing units and staff housing units managed by the housing corporation will officially be non-smoking units. The prohibition on smoking includes tobacco and cannabis products as well as vaping, and extends to balconies and common areas of buildings.

Mr. Speaker, the housing corporation is taking a number of steps to inform and educate both public and staff housing tenants of this upcoming transition. In addition to working closely with our local housing organizations, the housing corporation will circulate a notice to tenants before the Act comes into force, informing them of these changes.

(interpretation ends) The Nunavut Housing Corporation is also updating its tenancy agreements to include prohibitions on smoking in units. As per the *Tobacco and Smoking Act*, these prohibitions on smoking extend retroactively to all current public housing and staff housing leases managed by the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Mr. Speaker, if tenants are found to have been smoking or vaping in their units, they could be subject to fines. Additionally, repeat offenders could be subject to actions through the Residential Tenancies Office, up to and including eviction.

Mr. Speaker, the Nunavut Housing Corporation is pleased to support this important piece of legislation and is proud to offer its tenants healthy accommodations free from the dangers of second-hand smoke. This is a step in the right direction to ensure healthy futures for all Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Environment, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Minister's Statement 212 – 6(2): Protected Areas in Nunavut

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Good morning. I also extend my condolences to my colleague and the family members. My heart goes out to you.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to provide an update on the steps that the Government of Nunavut will take regarding protected areas moving forward.

In recent years the Government of Canada has proposed several land and marine protected areas in Nunavut without much input and consultation with our government.

Mr. Speaker, our government must participate and provide guidance on areas that need to be protected. Our stance has been focused on getting a devolution agreement, but in the meantime Canada really needs our input. The time is now to participate in the global efforts to ensure that there are adequate protected areas.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Environment has begun working towards a Protected Area Strategy. This strategy will provide support for the long-term protection goals of lands, waters, and air that are critical to the health of Nunavummiut's wildlife, cultures, and economies.

As we work toward these goals, we recognize the need to build capacity for the management of our protected areas portfolio. We will also continue to engage our

stakeholders and particularly with the federal government, Inuit organizations, and hunters and trappers associations, whose input is crucial.

Mr. Speaker, protecting and conserving Nunavut is essential to our well-being, and we are committed to balancing habitat protection with responsible development opportunities that can help our territory grow and prosper. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Culture and Heritage, Ms. Quassa.

Minister's Statement 213 – 6(2): On-the-Land Program in Whale Cove

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also extend my condolences to my colleague. I will have you in my thoughts, including your family.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform my colleagues of the successful on-the-land program that was held in Whale Cove from December 12 to 16, 2022.

Mr. Speaker, two youth from each Kivalliq community were selected to participate in this program and learn traditional skills from elders. The youth learned how to properly butcher and skin caribou, prepare the skin for winter, preserve meat, and ice fish with nets. Elders also passed on traditional survival knowledge, including the practice of sharing their catch with other hunters and their families.

Mr. Speaker, these types of programs facilitate the transfer of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* to the younger generation, which is critical for the preservation and revitalization of our culture and language.

Mr. Speaker, the department is planning to hold other programs this spring, including drum dancing and throat singing in Igloolik, as well as a tool-making workshop in Kugaaruk. I look forward to providing the House with updates on these activities at the next opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform Nunavummiut that although my department coordinates and delivers a number of workshops across Nunavut each year, individuals and organizations are also able to access grants and contributions funding from my department to carry out community-led initiatives that support the revitalization of our culture, language, and heritage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 264 – 6(2): Ryan Paungrat Receives Red Seal in Plumbing

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Good morning to my fellow Baker Lake residents and I hope you all have a good day today.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize a resident of Baker Lake whose name was mentioned last week, Ryan Paungrat, a local housing maintenance worker who started working in 2015, and he applied for the trades school courses, specifically plumbing.

He was recognized last week with the highest acknowledgement with Canada of tradespeople, as he can now work anywhere with his, in English (interpretation ends) Red Seal Certification Plumber (interpretation) and Mr. Ryan Paungrat is a young man, with couple of children, and now he has a whole career ahead of him.

He is now capable of supporting his family with an income to buy foods, clothes and other good items households need, so that makes me rather happy, and he is always helping out his relatives, obviously, so I express my pride in his accomplishment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit-Sinaa, Ms. Brewster.

Member's Statement 265 – 6(2): The Use of Health Information

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my colleagues for their kind words. The terrible and undeniable and unimaginable truth is that too many of us, in this room and across the territory know from experience what my family is going through today as we mourn our son, and we have important work to do together to break the cycle of suicide in this territory.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my concerns regarding the arbitrary decisions to make health information public or not. I found it very interesting that the minister was comfortable referring in detail to two specific surgical procedures carried out at the Qikiqtani General Hospital in his minister's statement on Monday, and yet he will not release tuberculosis data for Nunavut due to privacy issues.

Mr. Speaker, population-based health surveillance is an important epidemiological tool to monitor the disease burden on a population, following the epidemiology of disease can help to identify new pathogens and help us to be prepared for outbreaks. The dissemination of surveillance data is a critical step in planning in carrying out public health activities. Apologies. Awareness is the key component in disease prevention, early detection, targeted therapy, and effective treatment. Being aware of a disease and its

symptoms leads to people to taking preventative action going for screening tests and checkups.

Nunavut's Information and Privacy Commissioner was quite clear in expressing his view that there are very few circumstances in which health data should not be suppressed.

Mr. Speaker, the commissioner indicated in his report respecting an applicant's request for tuberculosis statistics that Nunavummiut deserve to know if their government is making the right choices about tuberculosis. Is it directing the right resources to the right places at the right time?

Mr. Speaker, this speaks to accountability. We cannot address what our government is doing to address this disease if the government withholds relevant information, including the relevant statistics. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Member's Statement 266 – 6(2): The Ongoing Work as a Member of the Legislative Assembly

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to the people of Nunavut. Today is our last day here in the House during this winter sitting. I rise today as we have been here a little over three weeks, with long hours, experiencing both stressful situations, as well as happy times. I do feel for my colleagues, but we have to keep going.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to urge every one of you, including the ministers and the regular members, to listen carefully to the discussions and dialogues that we hold in the House about where the government is going to be going. I urge the regular members to be even stronger in voicing their opinions. We have to read and be well informed and face the government on the challenges that we face, and not wait until the next session. We have to hold dialogue in between the sessions.

I just wanted to make that comment, Mr. Speaker. I would like to wish everyone a nice spring. I do want to thank the people of Iqaluit for being very welcoming. I urge the members that we do have a lot of work to do as ministers and regular members. Please make sure that you voice your concerns. There is a lot more we can do. I am challenging everyone because we do have a lot of work to do. The people have placed their trust in us to represent them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

Member's Statement 267 – 6(2): Invitation to Ministers to Visit Sanikiluaq

Mr. Qavvik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning colleagues. I rise today to make a statement on our last day of the winter sitting.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, after having been in the capital city for a number of weeks, I am very much looking forward to returning to my constituency. As the days are getting longer and the weather is getting warmer, I am pleased to take this opportunity to again, extend an invitation and a warm welcome to all ministers to take the opportunity to visit Sanikiluaq. I, again, thank the Premier for having visited Sanikiluaq in person during our term.

Mr. Speaker, these visits provide an important opportunity for ministers to see our community circumstances and needs with their own eyes. For example, Mr. Speaker, I would very much like to show the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Arctic College the condition of our current community learning centre.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like the Minister of Community and Government Services to have the opportunity to review progress being made by his department on a number of critical infrastructure projects, including our community's new hamlet office and water infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to close by wishing all my colleagues successful spring hunting, and I look forward for the reconvening of this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Member's Statement 268 – 6(2): Appreciation of the Uqutaq Society of Iqaluit

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, colleagues, and special guests, joining us in the visitor's gallery, as well as Nunavummiut viewing our proceedings from home.

Mr. Speaker, today on our last day of the winter sitting, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous work that is done by the Uqutaq Society, its board of directors and employees, in their goal to provide safe, healthy, and dignified housing solutions and supports for homelessness.

Mr. Speaker, since its inception as a territory, Nunavut has experienced a severe housing shortage resulting in numerous social issues associated with overcrowding and homelessness. The housing crisis across Nunavut continues to affect the homelessness situation here in Iqaluit.

Mr. Speaker, the Uqutaq Society was founded in 2009 when it took over the operation of the Salvation Army's men's shelter in Iqaluit, the only operating homeless shelter in

Nunavut at that time. Over the past several years the Uquutaq Society has expanded in an effort to meet the needs of Iqalumiut and others. I should note that approximately half of the shelter's clients originate outside of Iqaluit.

Besides operating the men's homeless shelter, a low-barrier shelter, a transitional housing program, and an affordable housing program. The Uquutaq Society connects clients with partner organizations in the community that provide cultural opportunities and services including needs assessments for referrals to community programs, social assistance, and mental health and addictions services. The men's homeless shelter provides a meal service and supports programming to assist clients to move towards the transitional housing program into public housing or into other some other form of independent living.

Mr. Speaker, the shelter is always at capacity as it supplies much-needed relief. Some men including elders have actually been living in the shelter for years.

Mr. Speaker, the Avataq transitional housing program also provides 26 beds in a communal living facility where clients work with staff to develop individualized work plans that aim to prepare them for independent living. The low-barrier shelter also accommodates up to ten men and seven women overnight.

Mr. Speaker, I've got a few more comments to make, and I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statements. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There is none, continue, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, members.

As I was mentioning, the low-barrier shelter offers temporary accommodations for those who are unable to access other shelter programs.

Mr. Speaker, the lack of affordable housing in Iqaluit remains the biggest obstacle for shelter users, couch surfers, and other vulnerable people to establish a stable independent lifestyle.

Mr. Speaker, the society is now working on two additional developments; the first is an affordable housing development project for single room occupancy at the butler building, and the second is a planned expansion of low-barrier services at the former site of Nunavut Country Foods.

Mr. Speaker, the society plans to develop this site into a three-story building which can contain a day warming program, 40 shelter beds and a transitional housing program with another 14 beds. The facility will also include a commercial kitchen to feed occupants on site, and for the most vulnerable and currently underserved people of Iqaluit.

Mr. Speaker, the Uquutaq Society has been providing the essential services to disadvantaged men in Iqaluit for 14 years. Most importantly, it has done tremendous work in acquiring additional buildings to meet the growing demands, as well as expanding their programming and creating the first transitional housing program in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I am continuously impressed for the dedication of the staff and the board of the Uquutaq Society and the progress that they have made and are continuing to be making.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my appreciation to the society as your work makes a long-lasting impact on the lives of so many. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Member's Statement 269 – 6(2): Tackling Suicide

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today with the love, tender, and care that I have. My sincere condolences to the family, to constituents, to my colleague.

Mr. Speaker, when I first came here for the winter sitting, the first day, I met with all of my colleagues, I asked for their help to tackle the issue of suicide.

Mr. Speaker, it is a tough subject to talk about, but I feel it needs attention in this House, as that is one of the reasons why I rise today, to assure that with the love, tender, and care that I have, I care for everyone, everyone who is watching, everyone who is listening. I care for my colleagues. I care for each and every one of you. I have love for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, my constituents believed in me to tackle the issue of suicide. There are many factors to suicide. It can be housing. It can be health. It can be education. It involves all the departments, so I call on the government and my colleagues: we need to work together, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, anything is possible when we all work together. We can achieve. We have a lot of goals to score. We're not here for ourselves. We're here for all Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, it is the last day of the winter sitting. I assured my colleagues that I would speak about the topic and the issue of suicide.

Mr. Speaker, I want all Nunavummiut to know and everyone watching: you are loved and you are cared for.

Mr. Speaker, it is a tough subject to talk about. I feel it needs to be talked about in this House from time to time. I call on my colleagues, each and every one of you. We need to work together, Mr. Speaker; when we do, anything is possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerck.

Member's Statement 270 – 6(2): Representing Constituents

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Welcome to you all.

This morning, the reason I rise, Mr. Speaker, is on behalf of my constituents. All of us were elected by our voter base to represent the riding that serves as our constituency and they witness our actions and proceedings as they play out during sittings in this House.

I cause my own distress sometimes here, as I attempt to advocate for my constituents, and for our fellow Nunavummiut. Nonetheless, I sometimes land in a depressive state, of intimidation, fears about the future as a result of trying to prod this government by using examples since this is the future we are preparing for. We require a solid foundation, and eventually an independent territory and that our constituents will voice their thoughts. I tried to voice their concerns, Mr. Speaker.

I give my utmost, and break out in cold sweats and even flustered as that makes me sweat. It is all to try to represent my constituents in the most truthful way possible. Some people opine that I sometimes go in the wrong direction, yes perhaps. This is after all, just a part of our daily lives as I always learn from my mistakes I commit here.

I sometimes regret that outcome due to the mistakes, but one can never turn back time. We can only move forward, and I will yet move forth, and to work passionately on behalf of my constituents. We are all products of our constituents who want us to properly serve them and all the elected members here.

We are reminded that we need a good base, and this forms my basis. I still search for a solid base. Although we hit barriers, we can't just say yes to them. I will strive to just continue on behalf of my constituents.

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

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude his statement. Are there any nays? There is none. Continue, Mr. Kaernerck.

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you.

The mandate that we have, *Katujjiluta*, to work together, I work together with my constituents. That's what we do, we help each other and try to do things. Even though we're a small community, my constituents help each other. Sometimes I don't know what to do next here, but I have to talk on their behalf. The *Katujjiluta Working Together Mandate*, we all look at it a different way, and that's what I'm trying to do.

I want to express my appreciation to all my constituents. This winter sitting, we've gone through hard times, and we've gone through emotional times. We have to set things up for Nunavummiut. I don't know how, but when I'm asking questions on behalf of my constituents, they have certain expectations. They expect big things. How can I be heard better? I bring their needs, and what they want. That's what I try to see. That's my foundation, truly. I will continue to do the same thing.

Everyone, have a good morning. We are at our last day here. Our sitting is ending. I wasn't going to say these things, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for being welcoming and smiling. I'll stop there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Quttiktuq, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Member's Statement 271 – 6(2): High Arctic Resilience

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Grise Fiord was populated quite recently in 1950 with the relocated people. They had no idea of where to go hunting, and where the normal country food would be. So they did a lot of exploring in the 1960s and 70s. My uncle, with two partners, went across by snowmobile. They spent six days going in that direction, and they found a fishing lake. They were able to get fish, but then, on way back, they weren't able to go back, so they had to get rescued by airplane.

Once they found out where the animals were, they would go out and hunt them. The past year something was done for the first time. That lake is very far. It takes about 12 hours to get there. Nonetheless, the group used a vehicle to go to the lake, and they landed there. My maternal uncle has a stepson who has a side-by-side UTV, and once he heard it was possible to take the trip, he took the path.

He ended up arriving there in about 3 and a half hours, and his family with his children all arrived there during the winter, and I believe this is the first time a family with children has gone to that lake to go fishing. I wanted to note their precedent setting actions and express my pride in the High Arctic residents who are always exploring non-stop.

They are always hunting and searching for new hunting grounds, and they always look for new places that provide resources, animals or plants that can supplement their diets, and I am very proud of the High Arctic hunters. Furthermore, as spring is arriving, the hunters will all be going hunting, and I urge you all to be safe, and to eat the healthiest country food available.

With that, the passing on of knowledge extends to dangerous areas, and let us keep each other informed at all times to work together to ensure everyone is out safely, and only by cooperative work are our High Arctic Inuit succeeding and I take great pride in them,

since they were placed in an almost impossible situation, yet they have survived and thrived to date. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross.

Member's Statement 272 – 6(2): Appreciation of Inuinnaqtun Interpreters

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to those in Cambridge Bay. I just wanted to share my appreciation to all of our interpreters and thank them for their work that they've been doing over the session. It's really nice to have them here with us and translating. I love hearing our Inuktitut and Inuinnaqtun, and I thank them for translating those words to us and being able to do that.

I have much gratitude for them all, and in particular, three of the interpreters that work here are from my constituency, and I just want to share my appreciate to James Panioyak, Eva Ayalik and Attima Hadlari. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Minister for Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

Return to Oral Question 362 – 6(2): Iqaluit Deep Sea Port

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to turn back time a little bit to add an answer to George Hickes' question, the member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk. No. 362 – 6(2) on March 7, 2023 there was a question about the Iqaluit deep sea port.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to supplement answers I provided on March 7, 2023 following questions from the Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk George Hickes. (interpretation ends) The two late season fuel tanker operations at the Iqaluit port facility were authorized by the Department of Economic Development and Transportation. Prior to authorizing these operations, the department consulted with officials from Transport Canada to ensure that the requirements were being met.

The marine carrier managed communications with the Canadian Coast Guard, which provided icebreaking support. The Department also held a series of calls with the petroleum products division, Uqsuq Corporation and the marine carrier to ensure all parties understood their roles and responsibility and the potential risks were being mitigated.

At the time of operation, the Government of Nunavut had proper coverage in place for the facility and the liability coverage for our part in the operations. In addition, the marine carrier and the fuel distribution contractor are each insured for their respective operations, and the Government of Nunavut has their certification of insurance on file. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Hon. Minister responsible for Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Return to Oral Question 381 – 6(2): Funding Infrastructure Projects

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank and say my thoughts are with our colleague here (interpretation) and sending my love to you and your family.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I have a Return to Oral Question 381 – 6(2), asked by the member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, on March 2, 2023, concerning funding infrastructure projects.

Mr. Speaker, this return is quite detailed. I have filed it with the Clerk for transcribing into the *Hansard* for the public record, and for distribution to all members.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to supplement an answer to a question my colleague had asked regarding the head office of Qulliq Energy Corporation and if this building had used the green stream fund of the Canada Infrastructure Bank.

Mr. Speaker, the investment financing program within the Canada Infrastructure Bank was not a known funding opportunity to QEC at the time. At the time of the permit application, QEC had been applying to other “green” funding opportunities within the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

The member also asked about opportunities to access the Canada Infrastructure Bank green funds on other government projects, specifically for QEC, in order to reduce building costs to have a direct impact on energy rates in Nunavut.

QEC does work collaboratively with the Government of Nunavut and the Government of Canada to identify federal funding investment opportunities that allow QEC to improve energy and operation efficiency and pursue alternative energy projects.

The current and past projects where QEC obtained funding contributions from government funding programs are as follows:

Current:

1. Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (INFC) - Arctic Energy Fund. Under this program QEC secured \$175 million in funding to upgrade the aged power plant infrastructure.
2. Low Carbon Economy Fund (LCEF). QEC secured \$6.3 million for the installation of new District Heating Systems (DHS) in Sanikiluaq and Taloyoak.
3. Clean Energy for Rural and Remote Communities Program: QEC secured \$1.3 million to conduct renewable Penetration Studies.
4. Nunavut Carbon Tax Program: QEC secured \$2 million for the LED street lights program.
5. CANNor- Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency: QEC secured \$0.72 million to conduct Geothermal Resource Assessments to identify potentials to provide energy for community scale electricity generation and building heating app

Past (Completed)

Canada's Northern Responsible Energy Approach for Community Heat and Energy (REACHE) Program. QEC has secured \$1.7M under this funding to connect the Iqaluit Aquatics Centre to the community District Heating System (DHS). Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would formally like to recognize some special guests in the visitor's gallery today. Mr. Speaker, my member's statement acknowledged the tremendous work of the Uqutaq Society. Now it is my honour to recognize the individuals who make Uqutaq's progress possible.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by recognizing the members of the board of the society. Please stand when I call your name:

Mr. Steve Sullivan.

>>Applause

Ms. Kathleen Gomes.

>>Applause

Mr. Alan Webb.

>>Applause

I would also like to mention the board members that were unable attend: Tim Hoyt, Erin Wile, Kaitlyn Dayola, and Stephanie Clark.

I would like to thank you all for volunteering your time for such an important cause. Thank you. Mr. Speaker, now I would like to move on to the employees. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin with recognizing Ms. Laurel McCorrison.

>>Applause

Ms. McCorrison is a fierce advocate, and a force to be reckoned with. I would also like to recognize:

Pamela O'Neil.

>>Applause

Bryan Cassels.

>>Applause

Emmanuel Ogandimo.

>>Applause

Michelle West-Barney.

>>Applause

Again, I would also like to recognize the individuals that were unable to attend; Mr. Anthony Barney and Erin Lyon. Again, I would like to thank everybody, the employees at the Uquutaq Society for your service to the community and to the territory. Your work is so important and crucial for so many. Mr. Speaker, I would like to once again, thank all the individuals who make Uquutaq possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Cambridge Bay, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. I would like to introduce two phenomenal ladies, Mr. Speaker, who work with the Coalition of Nunavut District Education

Authorities, who are here with us this morning. I would first like to introduce Jeeteeta Merkosak, who is from Pond Inlet.

>>*Applause*

Jeeteeta is someone who has been involved in the area of education for many years. She has served as chairperson of the coalition in 2006, and in fact she was the first person to serve as chairperson when the coalition first opened its doors in 2006. She served until 2009, and again from 2018 to present. Under her leadership, the coalition has come a long way, and we look forward to new developments from the coalition over the coming months.

Mr. Speaker, the second lady is no stranger to this House, and I would like to welcome Pat Angnakak, who is the Executive Director of the coalition and began her employment in March of 22. She has just completed her first year of employment with the coalition. Welcome to you both. *Quana*

>>*Applause*

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) I want to recognize the people that are very important of my life, they are no strangers to this House. I've introduced them in the House in the past. I want to thank my wife Margaret Qavvik who has been...

>>*Applause*

...a true supporter in my life, Mr. Speaker. Without her support, there is no question that I would not be here today. Half of family are here, one is sleeping and two are at home.

>>*Laughter*

As a parent we know the abilities of our children, and I always tell my daughter Rosaline that she is going to be a doctor one day and she always says no, I will be something else. For our son, he is five years old, and there are thirteen more years for him to become eligible for NHL draft.

>>*Laughter*

There are big dreams and dreams do come true. I always watch hockey with him and we only watch Edmonton Oilers.

>>*Laughter*

I thank my family for being here with me, they have been here for the past two weeks, and they have tremendously helped me overcome whatever I have to do here, so (interpretation) that is all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: And welcome to your Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery, Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Janet, I love you and your family. I would like to recognize Jeeteeta Merkosak, my constituent. I have worked with her with the district educational authority and at adult education. I have been very appreciative of her, and she is a very good role model in our community as a woman. She takes education very seriously. She is a role model and a very friendly person; I would like to acknowledge her and recognize her. She's always been a very friendly individual, and I would like to welcome her to this House. Thank you.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Welcome to the House. (interpretation ends) Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Member for Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day. My love goes to Janet. I would also like to recognize a person I recognized the last time she was here. I would like to acknowledge and recognize Pat Angnakak and also Jeeteeta. I would like to recognize both of these individuals, as well as Laurel McCorriston. I have also worked with her organization. They do very important work and I look at the efforts they make and the growth they have created. It is very noticeable in Iqaluit. They also provide support not just to the people of Iqaluit. Again, I acknowledge and recognize their hard work that they do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu, Mr. Pauloosie Akeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker for recognizing me. I would like to recognize this morning, though she was just acknowledged; my aunt, Pat Angnakak, who is a long time Iqaluit-Niaqunnguu resident and I am very proud I can serve her here in the House. She had worked very hard for the benefit of Nunavummiut, and I thank her for that. I have learned a lot from her watching her here. Also, beside her, Jeeteeta Merkosak; I would like to recognize her and make her welcome to the House.

I would just like to acknowledge the future hockey stars in the Gallery. Always welcome here to Iqaluit, this may be a city, but the community is very friendly. We also had acknowledgement of the Uqutaq Society, whom we serve. Although we are poor in

Iqaluit, but we also utilize the Uqutaq Society. I thank them for coming here, the board of directors and employees from the Uqutaq Society. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Welcome to your Assembly. Item 6. Oral Questions. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerk.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 406 – 6(2): Katujjiluta Mandate

Mr. Kaernerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was just writing my notes for questions. My questions are for the Premier of Nunavut on the *Katujjiluta* mandate. Mr. Speaker, on November 7, 2022, he wrote a letter of the five priorities with elders that are living with dignity in Nunavut under Health, and community education and how we can develop that, and any benefits the community may have, to date.

(interpretation ends) When I comes to the priorities actions, Mr. Speaker, re-investing in education, and diversifying our local economy. I would like to ask the Premier of how that mandate going, as of today? Is the government still re-investing in education and in the local economies? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. Pauloosie Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleague for the question. (interpretation) I'd like to thank him for his very good question, too, in particular that the status our goals of the five. I could say, as the minister, Sammy just mentioned how we can look further in supporting our smaller communities, and how we can utilize our water in Nunavut. I raise that because that's an area that we want to get into, fishing. An example that is being reviewed and looked into.

The other question on education and how we can further invest, this is an ongoing thing. I, as the minister, have advocated for activities in communities. For example, pre-schools and Kindergarten that we wanted to focus and do a pilot project in communities for full-day classes for kindergarten. There are slowly emerging. That's in accordance with our mandate. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Kaernerk.

Mr. Kaernerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. During my Member's Statement, I talked about cooperation. The Premier indicated that they're reviewing the process, and possibly have full-day education classes for kindergarten. The school in Sanirajak is too small, and should we have a full-day kindergarten, it's going to place a burden on the teachers and the staff at the school. With the *Katujjiluta* mandate, are we treating everybody fairly and equally in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the member. Yes, we're looking at all the communities and we see them equally and fairly, and we also review the needs at the community level. It has been an ongoing subject, and I also wanted to include the daycare system, which has had an impact at the national level, and the introduction of \$10-a-day daycare fees. Yes, all communities are treated equally. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Kaernerk.

Mr. Kaernerk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Every community has to be treated fairly. Some of the statements I make in the House are something that I am passionate about, and that communities must be treated fairly and infrastructure be built at all communities. I would like to welcome the Premier to both Igloolik and Sanirajak, and I would suggest that he come to those communities before the spring session so that we can look at the schools and what can be developed when it comes to daycares and fisheries. Can the minister commit to visiting the Amittuq area before the spring sitting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the member for welcoming us to his communities. Yes, it is very important for elected members to visit the communities to have meetings with the local people, and also to see what is needed at the community level. I thank you very much for inviting me to your communities. Especially in search with rescue operations, those are the subjects that we would like to cover and talk about. I look forward that. I look forward identifying a date when I will be going to his communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Netsilik, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Question 407 – 6(2): Condition of Public Housing Units in Netsilik

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation. As the minister will recall, the Legislative Assembly approved the Nunavut Housing Corporation's 2023-24 capital estimates during our recent fall sitting.

Mr. Speaker, I was very proud to have voted in favour of the budget, which included approximately \$10 million in maintenance and improvement funding for the retrofit of public housing units in Nunavut communities.

Mr. Speaker, concerns have been brought to my attention that there are a number vacant public housing units in Taloyoak and Kugaaruk that are in need in repairs and retrofits.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm how many public housing units in Taloyoak and Kugaaruk are scheduled to be retrofitted during the upcoming 2023-24 fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Mr. Speaker, with the retrofits and repairs of houses at the community level, there are a quite a large number that require retrofitting. In Taloyoak, for example, there are four houses that needs renovations, and in Kugaaruk, there is another four.

We try to ensure that we provide maintenance, but at times there are delays because we are waiting for parts that are required, and then there is the ongoing maintenance that is done. There is retrofitting, and there are also damages at the same time. These houses are retrofitted every year, and repairs are done, Mr. Speaker. Those are retrofits that are happening at all communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister will also recall, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's 2023-24 capital estimates include approximately, \$7 million in funding for mould assessment and remediation.

Mr. Speaker, I am very confident that the minister will agree with me when I say that one of the most important initiatives being undertaken by the Nunavut Housing Corporation is to address the ongoing and serious problem of mould infestation.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update on mould assessment and remediation work in the communities of Kugaaruk and Taloyoak? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the mould remediation in Taloyoak and Kugaaruk, there are four that have been remediated in Kugaaruk, and in Taloyoak, there are 12 units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier in our sitting, I spoke about how proud I am that the Nunavut 3,000 Housing Plan indicates that approximately 70 new public houses will be constructed in the communities of Taloyoak and Kugaaruk over the next few years.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister highlight what design improvements and innovations are being considered by the Nunavut Housing Corporation to address such issues as mould infestation? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Mr. Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My addition was off a little bit on my previous response. I'd like to adjust that, Mr. Speaker. The total so far in mould remediation in Kugaaruk is 36, and in Taloyoak, it's 18, Mr. Speaker, just to correct my previous response. My math isn't as fast as I am.

(interpretation) With the improvements and renovations being considered by the Nunavut Housing Corporation, there are always improvements made every year. For example, there is the air exchange that is applied, and there is also building codes that have to be complied with. We need air circulation in a house, and those have to be considered with the houses that are being built by the Nunavut Housing Corporation. We look at how we can make improvements with the doors, and the windows, air exchangers, and so on. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Question 408 – 6(2): Solutions to Medevac Problems

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say “good morning” to the people in my constituencies, and my give my condolences to those who have lost their family members.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Health. (interpretation ends) On February 27 at the beginning of our sitting, I raised a number of concerns with respect to the medevac service for the community of Naujaat. The minister committed to conducting more research into this matter to determine its status. Can the minister provide an update on what steps he has taken to address these issues? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the member for his question regarding medevac services from Nunavut communities. It is of high importance to us, and if there is a delay, we are informed. We have regular communications with Keewatin Air. They inform us twice a day and give us updates on delays and scheduling and so on, and if there is a delay, they give us a reason why, and what they're going to do about it, or if they should call in another airline or another aircraft to go to that community.

We have looked at this matter, and if there are delays, we look at the reason, and there has also been correspondence between the airlines and the letter is cc'd to the member identifying what the reason was for the delay of that medevac aircraft. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for giving us an update. We're still waiting for the correspondence. (interpretation ends) Since we began this sitting, my constituents have continued to contact me with their concerns. I am sure the minister will appreciate that when we are facing extreme health risks, the level of anxiety does not help. Can the minister provide further details on the different options that may be available to ensure the residents in my constituency of Aivilik will not have to worry about the medevac plane arriving on time? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I would like to reassure the member's constituents that the issue of medevacs and the issue around service provision and managing the medevac contract is a very high priority. The clinicians within the department including our chief of staff, understand the potential consequences when you have a delay to a medevac, and they understand how important it is that our patients, I say "our" in terms of Nunavut's patients, receive timely medical care. So we are doing things in terms of managing that contract very closely.

Particularly for Kivalliq right now, we're in discussions or considering the addition of a jet to the fleet to serve that region and that's something that was received from the contractor in terms of recognizing the increased volume of medevacs, which I mentioned in our previous exchange.

Beyond just looking at the medevac issue, we're also looking at ways to prevent medevacs, such as increasing doctor visits to the community level and also using virtual access technology to allow clinicians to place eyes on patients in a timelier manner, which in some cases can eliminate the need for a medevac.

Those are just a few examples of what we're working on. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister, for that clarification. With respect to the virtual access technology that he mentioned, I believe it is geared more toward emergencies in communities that don't have access to full-time nurses. It was also recently pointed out that a death occurred in such a community.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I recognize that providing air service to all of Nunavut's remote communities is challenging and not just because of the weather and geography.

Will the minister commit to providing an update on what specific steps have been taken to address the medevac service situation for the communities of Nauyasat and Coral Harbour when we next meet in the House? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I can certainly commit to providing an update. Perhaps it would be a minister's statement or perhaps it would be a letter. We will work on that and figure out what form that will come in.

Mr. Speaker, I do recognize the concern that the member is conveying and I would like to reassure him that this is a very serious matter for the department. Where we want to go in terms of health care in Nunavut is to a downward trend in the number of medevacs. We want to strengthen staffing at the community level. We want to strengthen virtual supports.

We also want to see more doctor visits and more virtual or nurse practitioner care to manage chronic conditions. That's a longer term goal, but certainly the issue of medevacs will continue to be a very high priority for the department and I thank the member for raising it. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Before I go to the next member on my list, I want to welcome Olayuk Akesuk, who is no stranger to this House.

>> *Applause*

Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Question 409 – 6(2): Flexible Workplace Arrangements

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

Mr. Speaker, I would like to focus on the issue of how adopting more flexible workplace arrangements can foster greater workplace wellness and improve our employee recruitment and retention rates.

Mr. Speaker, the minister made a statement during yesterday's sitting of the House in which she described how she is working on the "development of a comprehensive human resource strategy for the Government of Nunavut."

In the minister's statement, she spoke about the importance of making the government an "employer of choice." Mr. Speaker, I could not agree more with this goal.

As we all know, approximately 40 percent of the government's positions remain vacant, so it is obvious that we need to be open to new ideas to improve our employee recruitment and retention efforts.

I would like to ask: can the minister highlight one or two specific initiatives that she is working on to make the Government of Nunavut an “employer of choice,” especially for younger Inuit applicants? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. That’s a good question. What you’re saying is true. We need to hire more staff, especially with the fact that we want to hire Inuit. We all know that. We are developing the (interpretation ends) Human Resources Strategy (interpretation) to see how we can make the government a good workplace to work at.

With what you said about the young people, the Summer Student Employment Program is a strong program that’s run by the government. We’re looking at that, and the fact that we can hire more people from the communities, especially through on-the-job training programs. Those are just some of the things. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: First supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I’d like to thank the minister for that response. As the minister is aware, the results of the 2021 Nurse Retention and Recruitment Survey, are publicly available on the Department of Health’s website. Information from the survey, and other documentation that has been provided to the Members of the Legislative Assembly identifies the need for more flexible employment options to improve work life balance, and staff wellness.

I would like to ask: can the minister highlight what are two specific initiatives that she is working on to provide flexible employment options to our public servants? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for asking that question. (interpretation ends) I understand where you are going in this question, but there are things that we haven’t discussed in detail, in terms of how we can have a more effective workplace, or work performance within the workplace. We will certainly look into this furthermore on how we can improve that. I don’t have anything laid out, in terms of how we want to...(interpretation) How else we can improve the workplace. We haven’t finished looking at all the details yet. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am well aware that section 1206 of the government’s *Human Resource Manual* outlines the guidelines in respect to employees who wish to apply for approval for, at work, what is referred to as a compressed work week.

Mr. Speaker, I am confident that the minister is well aware that a number of governments and employers in Canada and other countries across the world are exploring such concepts as the four-day work week. In light of the pandemic, and recent changes in the labour market, we now find ourselves in an employee's market, where employers are having several challenges to recruit new employees. Many of these organizations have switched over to a four-day work week to make themselves more alluring, and as a more attractive recruitment tool.

Mr. Speaker, the five-day work week is something that was created over 100 years ago, thanks, in a large part to labour unions negotiating reduced work hours. However, Mr. Speaker, we now find ourselves today in a very similar situation, where employees are stressed, burnt out, and facing work life balance challenges.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that this is a matter, which definitely considers our government's consideration. I would like to ask: will the minister commit to ensuring that her department's development of a new Human Resource Strategy specifically considers this concept? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you for that question. We have not considered that idea, nor have we talked about it, but it is something that we can consider. I believe what you are saying, that some staff burn out because they work such long hours.

Something that I did not mention earlier that is new, is to see how else we can help our staff. What we are starting to put together is to create a wellness division. Their role will be to support staff and brainstorm on other ways to offer support when employees are struggling in their positions. So the wellness division that we are putting together is new, and we want it to be comprehensive. I can discuss that further.

With regard to your question, we will have to explore and discuss that concept some more before deciding if that is the way to go. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

Question 410 – 6(2): Cultural and Visitor Centre for Sanikiluaq

Mr. Qavvik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, good late morning to my constituents in Hudson Bay. I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Culture and Heritage, and the president of the Qikiqtani Inuit Association should listen carefully, as I will be mentioning him. (interpretation ends)

Mr. Speaker, on November 2, 2022 the minister made a statement congratulating the Kivalliq Inuit Association on the completion and opening of the Kivalliq Inuit Association Cultural Visitors Centre in Chesterfield Inlet. The minister announced the

association has also begun building cultural centres in Naujaat and Whale Cove. I congratulate my good friends from Aivilik and Rankin Inlet-Chesterfield Inlet for their communities' new infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Culture and Heritage has provided \$280,000 in funding to support the construction of these centres. I applaud the department's commitment in supporting these communities with the important infrastructure.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, the community of Sanikiluaq is part of the Baffin Region, and we rely on the Qikiqtani Inuit Association. I would like to ask the minister if she can talk about the possibility of her department offering financial support to the QIA, or the Hamlet of Sanikiluaq directly, to build a cultural centre. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Culture and Heritage, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank to my colleague for asking about that. Is the member talking about a heritage centre or a museum?

If there is a building available that can be renovated to suit the purpose, the Department of Culture and Heritage has a program where groups can request funding to aid in the development of a heritage centre or a museum. If there is a building that is readily available that can be retrofitted, or renovated, the community can definitely request funding to have that work done. If the interior of the building is in need of repair, or if there is a need office equipment, there are programs available at the Department of Culture and Heritage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 7, 2022 members of this Legislative Assembly approved 2023-24 capital estimates of \$1.45 million under the Department of Culture and Heritage. Within that approved budget, \$500,000 is being requested for a new Public Libraries Facilities Contribution Program, which is modeled on the Heritage Facilities Program.

Mr. Speaker, Sanikiluaq's integrated community sustainability plan has identified the need for a cultural centre, that could include a public library, elders centre, youth centre, tourism centre and a cultural museum. The estimated for such structure was estimated to be \$200,000.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clarify what criteria her department uses to determine where to fund the construction of a new public library facility? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Culture and Heritage, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for the request to get information. Any community or individual may or is able to write an application for funding requests with outlying goals and if they have a building through funds requests through their local hamlet or any non-profit society, the Department of Culture and Heritage has funds available for renovations and in fact, people may request \$100,000 for renovations of buildings.

Also, funds for operations and maintenance may also be requested, but they have to go through the formal funding request process. On January 31, the applications are reviewed. The team that reviews the requests identify who will be approved for the funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. Initiatives like supporting the building of cultural centres, I have mentioned earlier, are very much rewarding to our Nunavut communities for a long-term. The government's efforts to preserve, promote our culture, promoting language and our heritage is important to all Nunavummiut. I would like to ask the minister: can she commit to supporting funding for a culture learning centre for my constituency of Hudson Bay? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Culture and Heritage, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleague. At Culture and Heritage, the support we provide with requests coming in and approvals are made if his community decides to request funds. There are funds for renovations or any infrastructure that may be requested for a heritage centre. As long as the application is submitted via a formal funding request and it is reviewed, yes, we would possibly be able to provide assistance if their application is approved, and further, if the project encapsulated in the application meets the program criteria, along with our established goals.

Additionally, I wish to inform my colleague that the Department of Culture and Heritage funds cultural and linguistic projects, traditional Inuit customs, for our elders and youth gathering places, heritage and archaeological sites, as well as certain types of libraries. These are some of the program funds that accept applications for funding requests. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Question 411 – 6(2): Child Care Funding

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) On March 9 there was an article from *Nunatsiaq News*... . Sorry.

My question is for the Minister of Education. (interpretation) I was rushing a bit there.

(interpretation ends) On March 9 there was an article from *Nunatsiaq News* and the title is, “Some licensed daycares in Nunavut still not offering \$10-a-day care.” It said, “One centre in Pond Inlet and one” in “Kugluktuk, as well as all daycares in Qikiqtarjuaq, are...not offering” the \$10-a-day care.

Mr. Speaker, Pond Inlet has three licensed centres. Can the minister tell me if there are any child care facilities in Pond Inlet offering the \$10 a care? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for the question. The Pond Inlet child care facility, Naurainnuk Daycare, is receiving the \$10 a day and has signed a contribution agreement. However, the Nasivvik High School Daycare has yet to sign the agreement and the department has been reaching out to the high school daycare to ensure that the \$10 a day child care agreement can be signed. We look forward for them to sign the agreement with our other child care facilities across our territory to implement the \$10 a day child care. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The article is confusing; if the Pond Inlet child care facilities were or were not offering \$10-a-day care.

Mr. Speaker, in the article, the minister indicates “We’re hoping that Kugluktuk will be signing any day, and we still need to get some more support for Pond Inlet.” Can the minister explain what support is needed for Pond Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for the question. In terms of Kugluktuk, they have recently signed their contribution agreement. They were actually implementing the \$10 a day in December and they have been now signed onto the agreement, so they are signed with the agreement.

The support for the high school in Pond Inlet, the daycare there, is just to ensure that the proper person or entity, whether it be the board chair or the manager, can work with our early learning and child care staff to sign that agreement and work with us to have that agreement signed for the benefit of Pond Inlet residents. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the explanation, Minister Gross. Can the minister commit to having someone in the office to offer the support to the high school daycare to assist them with any of the assistance they need? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* for that great question. Yes, we're always there to support our communities and the child care facilities and we will ensure that we have Pond Inlet's Nasivvik High School Daycare work to sign the agreement. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Question 412 – 6(2): Social Passing and Student Assessments

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the people of Arviat, I say “good morning” to you.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Education too.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister on social passing. It was a topic that was talked a lot about in the last Assembly and the Assembly before that, and it hasn't been questioned so much on here and it is an issue. There appears to be an issue in terms of some of the students that graduate grade 12 cannot go into university or college courses without upgrading.

I would like to ask the minister: how does a teacher or a school team determine if a student is ready and able to go on to the next grade? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for the question. The Department of Education has a division called Inclusive Education and that portion of the Department of Education works with the school team. If there is a particular student who needs special attention, then the school team will meet to analyze and work to support the student and their needs. If they require any special attention from health professionals or to get a diagnosis, then they can work through those channels, with the parents' consent, of course. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister didn't answer my question. My question was straightforward: how does a teacher or school team determine if a student is ready and able to go on to the next grade? If a student is in grade 5, how does a teacher determine that the student is ready for grade 6? I thank the minister for all the information, but my question was: how does a teacher or school team determine if a student is ready to go on to the next higher grade? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for the question. In terms of a student's needs, the department and the school team, so the teacher and those who are specialized to work in supporting students, will meet to have an individualized education program to ensure that they are able to graduate and work on their career path.

As I mentioned earlier, the parents are kept informed and there's consent that is given. There are signed agreements with the parents to meet the needs of the student with the curriculum that is there and meets the needs of the particular student. The curriculum is attained to be adapted for that student and their needs. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Mr. Speaker, I'm using all of my three questions to ask the same question. Mr. Speaker, the minister is not answering the question. I had more, but it's worthwhile to use all three of my questions to find out how a teacher determines if a student is ready to go on to the next grade. Do they do a test? Do they look at attendance?

The minister just talked about they work with the students, with the consent of the parents, to make sure that they can conform to the curriculum. That's what I heard.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister again: what ruler, what is used to determine whether a student is ready and able and capable of going on to the next grade above what they're currently doing in? It doesn't do anybody any favours to pass on a student that is not ready for the next grade; you're setting up a person to fail.

I'll ask the minister again: how does a teacher or school team determine if a student is ready and able to continue on to the next higher grade? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member again. This is an area that we're really trying to standardize via policy, so I thank the member for bearing with me as we're working to ensure that we have a correct policy and procedure for working with the students.

I can say that the teacher and the school team do assess the students by their classwork; also the tests that they do and the assignments. They have assessments for those and they use curriculum as benchmarks when they're working with the student if they need extra support. They use all those indicators to help support the need for the student if they do need it and those are identifiers to support the student and help them through what they need to get through their education. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Uqqummiut, Ms. Killiktee.

Question 413 – 6(2): Compliance with Nunavut’s Language Laws

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Firstly, good morning to the people of Nunavut. I rise today to direct my questions to the Minister of Health.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the subject I referenced revolved around the commissioner, rather the Languages Commissioner. I would like to turn my attention to you instead, as the questions I had revolved around health issues under the purview of the Department of Health specific to Inuit language service provision, or rather the four official languages or is it just three recognized languages, but this was the basis of my queries.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask questions related to the linguistic issues I raised earlier, and (interpretation ends) as I stated, seven years ago, a special report by Nunavut’s Languages Commissioner on her systemic investigation into the Qikiqtani General Hospital’s compliance with the *Official Languages Act* was tabled in this House.

(interpretation) With that context, can the minister outline the types of recommendations contained in the tabled report, and what action items have resulted from these recommendations within his office? That formulates my first question. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleague for her question on that matter, and within our department, we realize the importance as the Department of Health, our obligations to provide services in official languages.

Due to the need for clear understanding of health-related matters, and this is especially applicable within health care, both within this House and in communicating any announcement to the public, emergency health directives, emergencies and such within the field of health care.

We are fully cognizant of this requirement and regarding the applicability of these suggestions or (interpretation end) recommendations (interpretation) contained therein; we have begun to start the work towards that in past year once the report was tabled, that report she referred to.

Further, the Languages Commissioner along with her office staff, are whom we hold regular meetings with, and I just held a recent meeting with her after the submission of the report related to language service plans, and we have set up a (interpretation ends) language plan, (interpretation) and it’s currently in the works, and they are following the recommendations that the Languages Commissioner submitted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was clear. Languages are very important, communication, and being informed about what types of actions are being taken. The Department of Health provides services. (interpretation ends) It is up to the government's decision makers to maintain and strengthen efforts to implement the delivery of health services in all the official languages in healthcare facilities.

(interpretation) Ms. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister which recommendations have been implemented, or are they still being considered? What has been completed? That's my question, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. There are quite a number of recommendations that were made. Some have been implemented, and some of them are still in the works. For example, the teaching of Inuktitut to health professionals.

(interpretation ends) In terms of medical terminology training, which was something that was flagged in that report, I am pleased to report that the 50 health employees have participated in medical terminology training since 2017-18 to now. I should thank Nunavut Arctic College for allowing Health employees to enroll in those medical terminology modules.

We did have a slow down in the number of staff going through those training courses due to COVID. We are getting back on track right now. It's an important course, where Nunavut Arctic College is creating interpreter/translators, who could hopefully go into the health field in the future. When there are seats available in those classes, they allow us to put health staff into those classes. So they're very much appreciated. It's something that we're going to continue supporting. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for his response. With official languages and the recommendations, there are 14 of them. They have to be proficient in Inuktitut, or they have the right use the official languages, like English, Inuktitut, and French. Also, to set up or revise the policies to date. I called the Language Commissioner's office to talk about the concerns that were brought up, yet there have been no changes to date. The concerns, the lack of interpreters and translators and why is it that nothing concrete has taken place when we hear concerns in regards to languages? What changes have taken place? That is my question.

We have not seen any changes, or been provided services in Inuktitut and probably, French. That is the reason why I rose today; to better represent the majority of the people who use the Inuit language. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have heard these concerns, and are addressing them. Its not just talk. We are working on different ideas as they pertain to the usage of any recognized language, be it at the health centres, or the boarding homes, or when patients have to travel outside of their communities to receive medical care. (interpretation ends)

Mr. Speaker, a lot of progress has been made. There is a lot more for us to do in terms of strengthening Inuktitut language service provision in terms of health care.

In terms of working with the Language Commissioner's office, there have been issues to my knowledge that have been resolved, and improvements that have been made. We have had that acknowledgement from the Language Commissioner's office, so we might be on a bit of a different page here. In terms of the specific action items, I will list off a few things: we have increased clerk interpreter positions, we have increased virtual care. What does virtual care have to do with language? It allows patients to access care using their home dialect, which is something we have heard directly from patients that is important. We have brought on 24/7 phone-based interpreter service, and that is right across Nunavut. That is new.

You know, the list goes on. Through this year's budget Mr. Speaker, we have established a permanent Inuktitut support specialist position within our communication shop that is specifically looking at our communications territory-wide, and how we can strengthen those in Inuktitut.

The work continues, Mr. Speaker, on our active offer initiative, and that is a wide-ranging initiative right across the territory to strengthen that active offer for all Nunavummiut who come into our facilities. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Question 414 – 6(2): Grays Bay Road and Port Project

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) My sincerest condolences to our erstwhile colleague, having personally experienced the loss of a loved family member which we are unable to stop. Now, I want to wish my fellow Kitikmeot a good day.

I want to direct my questions to the minister about the planned construction of the port and road project over in our region. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

Mr. Speaker, as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Kugluktuk, I am proud to be one of the four MLAs who represent Kitikmeot communities in this House.

Mr. Speaker, my questions today concern the Grays Bay Road and Port Project.

As the minister is aware, the goal of this project is to construct an all-weather road in the Kitikmeot region that will connect mineral-rich areas with a deep water port.

As the minister will recall, the Government of Nunavut and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association were co-proponents of this project. It is my understanding that the Kitikmeot Inuit Association recently withdrew from this role.

Can the minister confirm the Government of Nunavut's current role in respect to the Grays Bay Road and Port Project? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have received correspondence from the Kitikmeot Inuit Association about this and I responded to them. From what I understand, there have been developments in recent days that I need to follow up in order to find out what's happening. This project, our government has always been in a supportive role if this road is to be built. There are a number of ways that I'm trying to help see this dream come to reality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, there has been discussion in this House about the importance of critical minerals. These are minerals that are essential to developing clean technologies and achieving a greener future.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has been increasing its focus on critical minerals. The development of the Grays Bay Road and Port Project would support the national Critical Minerals Strategy.

Can the minister confirm what discussions he has had with his federal counterpart concerning this subject? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The critical minerals are handled by a number of federal ministers. The one that's doing the main work on this is Minister Wilkinson. I have met with him and I have expressed that Grays Bay is one of the projects that we need to see in order for the critical minerals to be extracted within Nunavut if we're going to become self-reliant on our mineral extractions as a country.

That's the meeting I've had and I've also had two other meetings with our other federal ministers and raised the awareness. Also, Senator Patterson has been very proactive in this project and I have been in numerous discussions with him too. At that federal level, that's what I have been doing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Yes, that's great to hear. It would be great to be in the loop also, that it would be more accurate. Direct information would be great in order to share with the people, even the Kitikmeot.

The proposed Grays Bay Port and Road Project involves our neighbours in the Northwest Territories. Can the minister confirm what discussions he has had with his North West Territories counterpart concerning the project? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It was fortunate that the Premier of the North West Territories and the Infrastructure minister were in Greenland while I was there. We had discussed this very particular one because they are planning on building a road from Yellowknife up to the Nunavut borders. It was very fitting that Grays Bay would be a part of this, and that is something that I am trying to work with, with all of the parties involved, and I definitely will continue to inform the Kitikmeot Inuit Association and also to my member colleagues about this project.

I appreciate the questioning around this because it is one that I think will open up the link and the connection to Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Tasiluk, Mr. Hickes.

Question 415 – 6(2): Issues with Child Care Operations

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question today to the Minister of Education regarding the minister's statement that was read yesterday on childcare; specifically, the Canada-Nunavut Early Learning and Child Care Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, my first question is: how many licensed daycares are operating at reduced spaces versus capacity due to staffing issues? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker and *quana* to the member for that question. I don't have that level of detail as we just support the operation and maintenance, as well as the training for the daycares, but I can commit to looking into the matter and getting back to him when I have that information. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do look forward to that number. Mr. Speaker, in the minister's statement that was read yesterday, on the first page, the minister spoke to "...the Department of Education is working closely with our partners to implement

several initiatives under this agreement...”, alluding to the Canada-Nunavut Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, increased “...development of Inuktitut resources, increased training for child care workers...”, and lastly, Mr. Speaker, “...increasing the number of licensed child care spaces in the territory.”

What is the department currently doing to increase childcare spaces across the territory? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Minister Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker and *quana* to the member for that question. The Department of Education works to support those non-profits or individuals who wish to open up a childcare facility in the community that they are in. We have staff that work to support the entity through that process and work through all of the needs that need to be met to open up a facility. We also have funding available for renovations or for working towards opening up that space with the Canada-wide agreement.

We have had some work with some communities to reopen. I know Chesterfield Inlet recently opened a childcare facility in their community, and we are always happy to support them to opening up the space.

We have worked with our regional Inuit associations, who I know have funding available for infrastructure and are planning to open up some facilities in the near future in some of their communities that they serve.

I can't speak to them, but I do know that there are plans in the process for some communities, particularly the ones that don't have childcare facilities and others within the Qikiqtaaluk who are going to be benefiting from funds to open up childcare facilities, and the staff is very much happy to help any entity, including our regional Inuit associations, through the process of opening up a childcare facility. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the minister raised the topic of staffing. This is not just a Nunavut issue. This is a Canada-wide issue and questions continue to rise on the wisdom of government's announcing that they are building new childcare spaces when workers aren't available to staff existing ones.

Mr. Speaker, agencies across the country that run daycares say they are so short of early childhood educators that they doubt the national program of \$10 a day childcare can be delivered to all of the kids who will need a spot.

Mr. Speaker, there are many stories of daycare centers running at half capacity asking parents to take their kids out of care for a day or two, or a week; even shutting down operations entirely, all for a lack of staff.

Mr. Speaker, for parents, the staffing crisis threatens to make an already long wait for a daycare spot even longer. Mr. Speaker, this worker shortage jeopardizes and threatens the vision of making affordable, high-quality daycare accessible for all parents. It has been stated that it is the worst workforce crisis childcare has ever faced.

Mr. Speaker, childcare advocates say the root cause involves poor wages and benefits, giving workers little incentive to stay in the sector. Mr. Speaker, having a supply of qualified early childhood educators is key to getting a Canada-wide childcare system off of the ground.

Mr. Speaker, what is the point of building new spaces when workers aren't available to staff existing ones? Mr. Speaker, when is the department going to provide adequate compensation to childcare workers? It has been a longstanding issue that contributes to high turnover rates. When can these workers expect to receive salaries and benefits that recognize their contributions to our children's education and safety? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker and *quana* to the member for that great question. I can't sympathize more that we do need to enhance the wage of our early childcare educators.

Mr. Speaker, I can say that the department is happy to support to support the workforce and improve wage fairness and encourage our people who work in our childcare facilities to become certified and trained as an educator. The department is currently working on creating a wage grid, however, while this work is undergoing, the department has implemented a wage top-up for the staff as a retention bonus as an interim measure. So I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I am pleased to share that the Department of Education has provided the interim measure to licensed staff at licensed childcare facilities, and this includes a wage top-up to staff and a retention bonus.

The wage top-up is \$4.50 an hour, above the worker's current pay, and out of the 52 childcare centers, we have supported over \$2.5 million for this fiscal year, Mr. Speaker. We have also had a retention bonus that was offered to our full-time childcare workers who receive \$4,000, twice this year. Part-time childcare workers receive \$2,000, twice this year, and casual childcare workers receive \$1,000, twice this year.

So out of that, 47 childcare centers access the retention bonus, which amounts to over \$2.6 million, Mr. Speaker. So those are some interim measures that we are using the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement to support and retain those valuable people that are working in our childcare sector, and I can't thank them enough for being there for our youngest population and mentoring them through their early years of life, and working in their facilities and providing the support to our youngest population in Nunavut. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Speaker: Members, the time allotted for question period... Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek unanimous consent to extend oral question period. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Are there any nays? There are none. Before we extend question period, we will break for lunch and start again at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 12:15 and resumed at 13:28*

Speaker: Welcome, colleagues. Welcome back. Before we went for lunch, there was a request to extend question period, and there were no nays, so question period is now extended for another 30 minutes.

Oral Questions. Member for Rankin North-Chesterfield Inlet, Mr. Sammurtok.

Question 416 – 6(2): Issues with Medical Boarding Home in Rankin Inlet

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I'd like to direct my questions to the Minister of Health. I'd like to follow-up on my questions from March 7, in which I had asked the minister about the boarding options for medical travel clients who travel through Rankin Inlet and get stranded.

Reading the *Blues* from March 7, the minister stated, "If the patient arrives into Rankin Inlet and wants to get a room upon landing, they have to inform a local worker about their upcoming trip and request accommodations beforehand."

Mr. Speaker, a traveller who is stranded due to the delayed departure of the aircraft cannot know beforehand that they will need a place to rest while they wait for their flight.

Can the minister clarify what steps are being taken to ensure that medical clients travelling through Rankin Inlet will have a place to go to if they are stranded on an emergency basis? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the question. (interpretation ends) I believe the exchange, if I recall correctly, the member had mentioned day rooms, and in responding I was referring to the provision of day rooms, and day rooms are those that are provided to travellers that are in transit, so for example somebody who leaves Baker Lake, they arrive into Rankin Inlet, and then their waiting

for an extended period for a flight to Winnipeg, so they're not actually supposed to be staying the night in Rankin Inlet, say for example if it's an elder or somebody with a physical ailment where they need to rest and they need something more comfortable than the airport, that's when day room provision comes into play, and the rule that we use is usually a four hour layover, so that's what that excerpt from the Hansard I believe was referring to, and I hope that clarifies it for the member. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I noted in my earlier line of questioning, if the hotels are full, there is no place for medical clients to go. Many of us recall seeing individuals sleeping on the very uncomfortable benches in the Rankin Inlet airport, this should not be happening.

Can the minister clarify to the benefit of the medical clients travelling through Rankin Inlet from the outlying communities what accommodations they can expect if their flight is delayed while travelling to or from their home? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Maybe if the member could clarify his questioning, he referred to travellers sleeping on benches, if he could clarify when that is something, did that happen recently? I would just like a little more background in terms of what I'm responding to. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Member Sammurtok, please ask your question again, clarify your question. Thank you.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I'm aware of, to my knowledge, I'm aware that it happened at least once, and it happened last winter, and that's when they couldn't find a hotel room because the hotels were all booked solid. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) And I appreciate the clarification from the member around that specific occurrence. In terms of travellers being delayed, if they are delayed we make strong efforts to accommodate them, whether it's in Rankin, whether it's in Iqaluit. We do from time to time run into issues with hotel capacity, and that's when our staff have to use Qanuqtuurniq and try to find a place for guests to stay. We have taken measures to strengthen our response in those types of cases. So in terms of where a patient should go, they should contact the medical travel number for their region, whether it's in Rankin Inlet, whether it's in

Iqaluit, we do have 24/7 coverage of our medical travel hotlines. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just for the benefit of the minister, I'm talking about the Kivalliq region. Mr. Speaker, I have asked numerous times about establishing a stand-alone boarding home in Rankin Inlet. The minister has indicated that a number of medical travellers going through, the community does not board them. However, I continue to hear from Nunavummiut, many of those who are not residents of Rankin Inlet, but are just travelling through, about this problem occurring in the community I represent.

Will the minister commit to re-considering providing additional boarding options in Rankin Inlet, so that the medical travel clients are not left stranded when the hotels are full? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) In terms of responding to that, I can certainly commit to looking into it again. However, I suspect that looking into it, we will look at the numbers, which have been looked at before, which do not support establishing a boarding home. So we do have reliance on hotels in Rankin Inlet. We do have a strong commitment to ensuring the comfort and safety of our medical travellers. It's something that we take very seriously.

If the member would like to look into the numbers of travellers in Rankin Inlet that are passing through, or travelling to Rankin Inlet, I can certainly do that again. Usually, in these types of cases, Mr. Speaker, the numbers do not lie. Either you have the critical mass needed to justify a facility, or you don't have the numbers.

I had previously indicated to the member, right now, when it comes to infrastructure, we're focussed on two things: Which are community health centres and elders' facilities. Those are our top two priorities, in terms of infrastructure that we're working on.

If the member would like to propose that we focus on other infrastructure priorities, he is certainly entitled to do so. I feel quite strongly that community health centres need to be a priority, as do elders' facilities. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Question 417 – 6(2): Critical Minerals Development

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the Minister responsible for Mines. I would like to return to the issue of critical mineral development in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will recall, I have spoken on a number of occasions, about the importance of critical minerals to our collective future.

I have clearly pointed out, on a number of occasions, that rare earth elements are essential for developing a de-carbonized green economy, is integral to such clean technologies as solar panels and electronic vehicle batteries.

On Tuesday last week, the federal Minister of Natural Resources announced \$40 million in funding an initiative that is intended to, “Advance Canada’s northern and territorial critical mineral’s agenda, by supporting regulatory dialogue, regional studies, land use planning, impact assessment, and Indigenous consultations.”

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Mines if he can describe the extent to which his department is engaged in this important work? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for Mines, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have ongoing dialogue with NRCAN on the critical minerals. When Minister Wilkinson announced that there is \$4 billion, I had initial meetings with him, and discussed the importance of critical minerals, and that critical minerals need to be extracted from Canada, in order for us to be sufficient.

With that in mind, out of the 31 critical minerals that are identified in Canada, 22 of them are here in Nunavut. We need investments. For that announcement that he did, we’re going in through the details of that in order for us to engage with them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the minister’s response. As the minister is aware, last year’s budget announced a \$1 million injunction in funding for the creation of a new mineral exploration program called discover invest and grow, or DIG for short. I previously questioned the minister on how this new program would be rolled out, so I’m sure that he has some facts and figures at his fingertips today.

Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting to find out the critical mineral potential that we host here in Nunavut. I would like to ask can the minister update this House on how much funding to date has been allocated under the DIG program for projects related to critical mineral development in Nunavut? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for Mines, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I was trying to dig as fast as I can in terms of getting the information on the DIG program, but for that program, and I don’t have that with me and with the support of this House, we did receive the assent to get that

program running, so I'll be very happy to report that once those do take place to this House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Question 418 – 6(2): Kugluktuk Ilavut Centre

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) My questions are for the minister of justice and they concern the issue of Kugluktuk Ilavut centre.

As the minister will be aware, his department issued an employment opportunity to correctional caseworker positions in Kugluktuk Ilavut Centre.

Mr. Speaker, these two positions are restricted to Nunavut Inuit who reside in Kugluktuk. The closing date to apply for these positions is on March 31, 2023.

Can the minister clarify how many positions are filled and how many are vacant in the Kugluktuk Ilavut centre? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The total number of staff for Ilavut Centre is 15. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The Kugluktuk Ilavut Centre requires a renovation to extend the building lifecycle and address issues concerning the water system, sewer systems, additional storage space and the installation of a generator.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister will be aware, request for proposals was recently issued for the Kugluktuk Ilavut Centre renovation and addition. However, on March 9, 2023 the tender was cancelled to be reissued at a later date.

Can the minister clarify the reason for the cancellation of this tender and can he clarify the anticipation timeline for the issuing of this important tender? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. With the information that's before me, I don't have any record on whether it was cancelled or not, it probably was, but for the work around getting the renovations and addition of office and program spacing, that's the work is supposed to start on summer of 2023. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your second and final supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The Kugluktuk Ilavut Centre is a minimum security facility which operates as a halfway house since 2005. The facility currently has the capacity to house 15 clients. Can the minister clarify what specific rehabilitation and reintegration programs Ilavut Centre offers to support its clients? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Justice, Mr. David Akeeagok.

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. There's a long list of programs that this program Ilavut Centre offers, which is; life skill programming, elders counselling, work release, drug and alcohol counselling, community volunteering, carving, cooking, Inuit cultural skills, men's group and brighter futures, mental health counselling, hamlet contracting and Pilimmaksamiq education program. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Question 419 – 6(2): Requirements for Upgrades after Graduation

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Education, and they regard the high school students and furthering their education. When the students complete grade 12 and they need to upgrade their education, and this happens all across Nunavut where... is the education system standardized? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for the question. So the department of education is currently working on our Nunavut make curriculum, and at the moment we have a number of different curriculum from various jurisdictions that our school use, and I can say yes, it is a standard process for the schools, there is assessments and grading and reporting and all of the pieces and components that articulate to having that standard process integrated into the education system. So the answer is yes, Mr. Speaker. *Quana*.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the minister for the response. When they come from smaller communities and they complete their grade 12 and try to get to arctic college or university, they end up always having to upgrade. Why is that the case? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for the question. I think there are a number of factors, each individual is different, so I think sometimes upgrading can happen in our smaller communities because our ratio of students and teachers, we don't have enough teachers in some instances where our regional community centres can offer courses more than once a year, and sometimes in our smaller communities just because of the teacher and the qualifications that they carry, they can maybe only offer the course once a year or every few years, depending on if there's interest with more than one student for example, but I can assure the member that the department of education is always happy to support students if they want to attain higher level courses by doing distance courses, and supporting the students through that work, and working through that, if the student is interested.

I would like to share, Mr. Speaker, that because with our recent budget, we did ask for community guidance counsellors in all of our schools. This will really help support the career pathing of our high school students. They'll be able to work directly with their guidance counsellor on their grades, and their achievements, and work toward going into whatever field of profession they would like to go on into post-secondary with.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to note that the Department of Education implemented last year that the students receive their grades and their number of credits per semester, so the students can keep a closer on where they are, credit-wise to get toward graduation so they know what they're numbers are, and they can work directly with those at the school level to help them to achieve their graduation.

With these new tools that are there, I think we've seen major improvement to having those assessments provided more frequently to the students, so that they can keep an eye on that information. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Second and final supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the minister just explained that the smaller communities should accept basic lower education, while the regions provide higher education. Can the minister explain that? Thank you.

Speaker: Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for that. Sorry if there was miscommunication. I didn't mean to say that there is more opportunity. In terms of our bigger centres, there is a more numbers of teachers, and more students. So we're able to offer the courses because there are more teachers that are qualified to teach it more than once a year, for example, as in some of our small communities. They don't have the number of students and the teachers, so it becomes an act to ensure that we are able to offer the courses that students need and working toward them. They just might not happen as frequently.

There is the option for students to take courses online, whether they're in a smaller community, or in our regional centres, Mr. Speaker. We do try and ensure that students are all treated equally. We don't ever have them not be treated equally, but there are parameters, sometimes, with the smaller communities and the number of teachers that we have being able to offer courses more than once per semester. Which can be a barrier, sometimes, for students. We want to work to support to ensure that they aren't facing those barriers. I hope that clarifies for the member.

If there are ever any students that wants particular help, there are academic advisors, there are teachers, principals, those people that can help the students, and in the near future, our guidance counsellors, who will help the students set up their career path, even before they get to their next grade, so they can choose what courses they want to enrol in for the next school year or next semester. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Oral Questions. I have no more names. Item 7. Written Questions. I recognize the Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Item 7: Written Questions

Written Question 002 – 6(2): Remote Work

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My written questions today are for the Minister of Human Resources, and they concern the subject of remote work.

Mr. Speaker, a number of questions have been asked in the House by my colleagues and me concerning this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is important for Nunavummiut to have a clear picture of the extent to which this practice is being permitted in the public service without a remote work policy, which is why I'm asking these questions today.

Mr. Speaker, the written questions are very detailed, so I ask that they be entered into the record as read.

1. What is the Government of Nunavut's current policy regarding remote work?
2. Under what circumstances may an indeterminate, term or casual employee of a Government of Nunavut department, public agency or territorial corporation whose position is located in Nunavut be eligible to work remotely outside of the territory?
3. What is the approval process for such requests?
4. In circumstances where an indeterminate, term or casual employee of a Government of Nunavut department, public agency or territorial corporation whose position is located in Nunavut receives approval to work remotely outside of the territory for a

period of time exceeding thirty (30) consecutive days, what is their eligibility for the following allowances and benefits:

- a. Nunavut Northern Allowance (within the meaning of Article 39 of the *Collective Agreement between the Nunavut Employees Union and the Minister responsible for the Public Service Act*);
 - b. Nunavut Household Allowance (within the meaning of the *Nunavut Household Allowance Policy*); and
 - c. Staff Housing (within the meaning of the *Government of Nunavut Staff Housing Policy*)?
5. Between April 1, 2020, and March 13, 2023, broken down by employing entity (department, public agency or territorial corporation), employment category and *Nunavut Agreement* enrollment status, how many employees applied for approval to work remotely outside of the territory?
6. Between April 1, 2020, and March 13, 2023, broken down by employing entity (department, public agency or territorial corporation), employment category and *Nunavut Agreement* enrollment status, how many employees were granted approval to work remotely outside of the territory?
7. With respect to the 5,508.61 total positions referred to on page 3 of the September 30, 2022, *Towards a Representative Public Service* quarterly employment report published by the Government of Nunavut:
- a. Which positions are located outside of Nunavut and where are they located?
 - I. Which of these positions are currently filled by an indeterminate employee?
 - II. Which of these positions are currently filled by a term employee?
 - III. Which of these positions are currently filled by a casual employee?
 - IV. Which of these positions are currently filled on a contracted basis by an individual who is not a public servant within the meaning of the territorial *Public Service Act*?
 - V. Which of these positions are currently vacant?
8. With respect to the 3,458.18 filled positions referred to on page 3 of the September 30, 2002, *Towards a Representative Public Service* quarterly employment report published by the Government of Nunavut:
- a. Which of these positions are currently filled on an indeterminate, term or casual basis by an employee who has been working remotely outside of Nunavut for thirty (30) or more consecutive days?
 - b. Which of these positions are currently filled on a contracted basis by an individual not residing in Nunavut who is not a public servant within the meaning of the territorial *Public Service Act*?

9. With respect to the 2,050.43 vacant positions referred to on page 3 of the September 30, 2022, *Towards a Representative Public Service* quarterly employment report published by the Government of Nunavut:
 - a. Which of these positions are currently filled on a contracted basis by an individual residing in Nunavut who is not a public servant within the meaning of the territorial *Public Service Act*?
 - b. Which of these positions are currently filled on a contracted basis by an individual not residing in Nunavut who is not a public servant within the meaning of the territorial *Public Service Act*?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The written questions is entered as read.

Written Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

Written Question 003 – 6(2): Arctic Energy Fund

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been almost two years since my last written submission, so I would like to take an opportunity today... .

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lightstone: My written questions today are for the Minister of Community and Government Services and they concern the subject of the Arctic Energy Fund.

Mr. Speaker, my written questions are detailed, so I ask that they be entered into the *Hansard* as read.

Preamble:

The 2018 Canada-Nunavut Integrated Bilateral Agreement for the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program provides that \$175,000,000.00 will be allocated under the Arctic Energy Fund between the 2018-2019 and 2027-2028 fiscal years. The Agreement indicates that the Rural and Northern Communities Infrastructure stream of the program "... includes the Arctic Energy Fund, which will focus primarily on improving energy security through upgrading or replacing fossil fuel-based community energy systems and enhancing diesel transportation and supply in communities where connection to an electricity grid or relying solely on renewables as a source of energy is not a feasible solution. Finally, the Arctic Energy Fund will also support the transfer, in whole or in part, from fossil fuel-based systems to renewables."

1. What projects were funded in Nunavut under the Arctic Energy Fund for the following fiscal years:

- a. 2018-2019;
 - b. 2019-2020;
 - c. 2020-2021;
 - d. 2021-2022; and
 - e. 2022-2023 (to date)?
2. What were the outcomes of each project listed in response to question #1?
 3. To what extent did each project listed in response to question #1 “support the transfer, in whole or in part, from fossil fuel-based systems to renewables”?
 4. What process is used to determine which projects to submit for approval under the Arctic Energy Fund?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member is asking that the written question be entered as read. Written Questions. Member for Hudson Bay, Mr. Qavvik.

Written Question 004 – 6(2): Annual Fuel Purchases, Bulk Fuel Storage Capacity, and Annual Resupply Operations

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is my first time for written questions.

>>Applause

My written questions today are for the Minister of Community and Government Services and they concern the subject of annual fuel purchases, bulk fuel storage capacity and annual resupply operations.

Mr. Speaker, my written questions are detailed, so I ask that they be entered into the record as read.

1. Expressing the information in the same format as that which the Government of Nunavut provided in Return to Written Question 8-5(2), what quantities of fuel were purchased and delivered during the 2020, 2021 and 2022 calendar years?
2. Expressing the information in the same format as that which the Government of Nunavut provided in Return to Written Question 8-5(2), what is the current bulk fuel storage capacity in each Nunavut community?
3. With respect to the 2022 bulk fuel resupply, what were the scheduled dates of delivery for each Nunavut community?
4. With respect to the 2022 bulk fuel resupply, what were the actual dates of delivery for each Nunavut community?

5. With respect to the 2022 bulk fuel resupply, what specific factors accounted for early and/or late deliveries of bulk fuel in respect to each Nunavut community where delivery did not occur on the scheduled date?
6. From January 1, 2022, to December 31, 2022, which communities in Nunavut received fuel deliveries by airlift and in what amounts?

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The written question is entered as read. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Open Address. Item 10. Petitions. Item 11. Responses to Petitions. Item 12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. I recognize the Member for Arviat South, Mr. Savikataaq.

Item 12: Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters

Committee Report 014 – 6(2): Update on Review of Language Legislation

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today as the Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation to provide a report on the status of the review of Nunavut's language legislation.

Mr. Speaker, both the *Official Languages Act* and the *Inuit Language Protection Act* require that the Legislative Assembly of Nunavut conduct a review of the provisions and the operations of the legislation. As you will recall, a motion to refer this responsibility to the Standing Committee on Legislation was passed unanimously by this House on November 7, 2022.

As you will also recall, I announced on February 27, 2023 that invitations had been extended to a number of office holders and organizations to provide formal written submissions concerning the administration, implementation, effectiveness of provisions, and achievements of objectives of Nunavut's language legislation.

I would like to take this opportunity to again, extend the same invitation to members of the listening public and to all Nunavut residents who may have an interest in the legislation which governs language use in our territory.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report that a number of stakeholders have already indicated that they will be providing submissions to the standing committee. In order for the stakeholders and members of the public to have more time in which to prepare comprehensive and detailed submissions, the deadline has been extended to June 30, 2023.

Individual submitters may be invited to appear before the standing committee at our televised hearings which will now be held in September this year. The standing committee looks forward to hearing from Nunavummiut on this important initiative.

With that, I move the report of the standing committee be reviewed by the House. *Ma'na, quana, merci*, and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The member has moved that the report of the standing committee be received by the House. Do members agree?

Some members: Agreed.

Speaker: It is agreed. Tabling of Documents. Hon. Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 120 – 6(2): Government of Nunavut Progress on Katujjiluta Mandate Priorities

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the *Government of Nunavut Progress on Katujjiluta Mandate Priorities Highlights of 2022 Achievements and Plans for 2023*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Tabled Document 121 – 6(2): Petroleum Products Division Amalgamated Annual Report 2018-2021

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the *Petroleum Products Division 2018-21 Amalgamated Annual Report*. They may or may not respond to my colleague MLA for Hudson Bay's written question that he has tabled today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. I have one.

Tabled Document 122 – 6(2): Speaker's Statutory Tabling Requirements

I have one document to table today, which is a list of outstanding statutory tabling documents. Thank you.

Tabling of Documents. Mr. Hickers.

Tabled Document 123 – 6(2): Correspondence Dated March 13, 2023 from the Minister of Family Services

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have one document to table today in my capacity as Chairperson of Committee of the Whole. The document is correspondence that has already been received from the Minister of Family Services in response to questions that were asked during the March 8, 2023 proceedings of the Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. No more. Item 4. Notices of Motions. Item 15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Item 16. Motions. Item 17. First Reading of Bills. Item 18. Second Reading of Bills. Item 19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bill 12, 14, 19, and 20, with Mr. Malliki in the Chair.

In accordance with the authority provided to me by Motion 14 – 6(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

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

Chairman: In the Committee of the Whole, we have the following items to deal with: Bills 12, 14, 19, and 20. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) We wish to do a clause by clause review of Bill 12, Bill 14, Bill 19, and Bill 20. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are we in agreement we first deal with Bill 12?

Some members: Agreed.

Bill 12 – An Act to Amend the Commissioner’s Land Act – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: I would like Minister Joanasie: do you have officials you would like to appear before the committee?

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If you will allow, I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to let the minister’s officials appear before you?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: The officials may enter. For the record, Minister Joanasie, please introduce your officials and then proceed to your opening comments.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and colleagues. Good afternoon.

I am pleased to appear before the Standing Committee on Legislation to discuss Bill 12, *An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act*.

Appearing with me today are:

- Deputy Minister of Community and Government Services, Kyle Seeley; and
- Thomas Ahlfors, Director of Legislation Division at the Department of Justice.

Mr. Chairman and members, Bill 12 will address a legislative gap in the *Commissioner's Land Act* and allow a more appropriate land administration system in the territory. The Government of Canada has the power to transfer administration and control of crown lands in Nunavut to the Commissioner. Currently, there is no clear legislative authorization for the Government of Nunavut to administer lands transferred to the Commissioner of Nunavut after April 1, 1999.

The amendments proposed within Bill 12 will provide clear legislative authority to administer and manage public lands transferred to the Government of Nunavut after April 1, 1999.

Additionally, the proposed amendments within Bill 12 provide the Commissioner with the power to make an order accepting transfer of the administration and control of public lands by the Governor in Council to Nunavut.

Without these amendments, the Commissioner would personally be responsible for the management, sale, lease, or other disposal of public lands transferred after April 1, 1999, rather than the Deputy Minister of Community and Government Services, who normally exercises management and control of lands under the *Commissioner's Land Act*. Further, the Commissioner would have no legal mechanism to accept public land transfers.

Approval of Bill 12 will close a legislative gap in the administration and transfer of public lands in Nunavut.

I thank the members for their consideration of this bill, and I welcome questions from the committee. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Does the chair of the standing committee have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As the Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I wish to make some very brief opening comments as the Committee of the Whole begins its consideration of Bill 12, *An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act*.

The standing committee recognizes the overall purpose of the bill, which the minister described in his opening comments. During its consideration of the initiative, the standing committee engaged in an exchange of correspondence with the minister and appreciated his detailed clarification concerning jurisdictional matters.

This concludes my opening comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are there general comments? (interpretation) There being none. (interpretation end) Go to Bill 12 in your legislative binders. Bill 12, *An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act*. Clause 1.

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 3. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to Bill 12?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to put Bill 12 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Minister, do you have brief closing comments? Minister Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the committee for their consideration and the correspondence that we did have on this bill to make clarifications. I would like thank my officials before me, but also behind the scenes that have helped this bill progress today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

>>*Applause*

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Now please go to your legislative binder. (interpretation) I apologize. (interpretation ends) We are going to Bill 14. Do you have opening comments, minister?

Bill 12 – An Act to Amend the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act – Consideration in Committee

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do. Good day, again.

I am pleased to again, appear before the Standing Committee on Legislation to discuss Bill 14, *An Act to Amend the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act*. The officials before me are the two same, so I won't bother to introduce them.

Mr. Chairman, the Northern Employee Benefits Services (NEBS) operates in both Nunavut and the Northwest Territories as a multi-employer defined benefit pension plan for the municipal sector, broader public sector, and non-profit sector in both jurisdictions. In 2015, both governments adopted mirror legislation entitled the *Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act* (Act) to provide the Northern Employees Benefits Services pension plan with certainty with respect to the plan's legal standing and to formally regulate its operations.

Over the last two-and-a-half years, our government officials have worked closely with the Government of the Northwest Territories to identify revisions to the respective Acts in each jurisdiction.

Bill 14 proposes amendments to help ensure the legislation can continue to support effective long-term management of employee pensions, and to protect plan members from global crises or emergencies impacting markets like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specifically, the department is proposing amendments to expand the regulation-making authority of the minister to approve temporary measures during periods of crisis that may impact global financial markets. The ongoing global pandemic has highlighted the need for such temporary measures to limit the amount of personal investment that contributing members may withdraw from the fund during such periods to protect the pension plan, and ultimately the pension plan members, from further loss.

Additionally, the department is proposing to name and clarify the policy-making authority of the pension committee. Currently, the Act does not name the pension committee that administrates the Northern Employees Benefits Services pension plan, and one of the proposed amendments addresses this gap.

Further, although the pension committee has a means of enforcing policies in the legislation, in practice these powers are difficult to enforce with participating employers. In response, the department is proposing amendments to allow for more specific references to the policy-making authority of the committee.

Mr. Chairman, Bill 14 proposes further amendments to broaden the composition of the pension committee from its current maximum of seven members to a minimum of seven members. This forward-looking proposal will support Northern Employees Benefits

Services in establishing and maintaining a board that is representative of its membership and accommodates future growth.

In developing the proposed amendments, Northern Employees Benefits Services consulted with its membership and relevant stakeholders, including the Nunavut Association of Municipalities and the local housing organizations, to ensure the proposal being brought forward today is reflective of the needs of its membership.

Approval of Bill 14 will support the complementary implementation of Northern Employees Benefits Services legislation in both Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. I again, thank the members for their consideration of this bill, and I welcome questions. Thank you.

Chairman: Does the chair of the standing committee have opening comments? Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I wish to make some opening comments as the Committee of the Whole begins its consideration of Bill 14, *An Act to Amend the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act*.

The standing committee recognizes the overall purpose of the bill, which the minister described in his opening comments. The standing committee pays tribute to the approximately 2,000 residents of Nunavut and the Northwest Territories who are active members of the plan and who are employees of such essential organizations as municipalities and local housing organizations.

The standing committee recognizes the challenges involved in ensuring that all parties are fully engaged in the development and consideration of amendments to the mirror statutes in both jurisdictions. The standing committee looks forward to enhancing this engagement with its counterpart in the Northwest Territories. The standing committee also encourages the responsible ministers in both jurisdictions to revisit the issue of the pension committee's membership with a view to ensuring that the statute requires a certain number of committee members be either active or retired members of the plan.

The standing committee notes that one of the plan's strategic goals is to "continue with efforts to expand the NEBS program into the Yukon, working with the Yukon Government, Yukon Hospital and Yukon College." The standing committee will be monitoring this issue with attention. In the event that legislation is passed by the Yukon legislature, which mirrors the statutes that are currently in force in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, there will be significant additional complexities in respect to tri-territorial governance and coordination.

The standing committee notes that an annual report on the administration of the NEBS pension plan has not been tabled in the Legislative Assembly since September of 2020,

and encourages the minister to ensure that the statutory tabling requirements prescribed under the legislation are being met.

I note that my comments in respect to inter-jurisdictional engagement between the two legislatures also apply in respect to the pending major amendments to the *Workers' Compensation Act* in both jurisdictions that are anticipated to be introduced during the upcoming 2023-24 fiscal year.

This concludes my opening comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are there any general comments? (interpretation) There being none. (interpretation) Go to Bill 14 in your legislative binder. Bill 14, *An Act to Amend the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act*. Clause 1. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 3. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 4. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 5. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 6. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 7. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to Bill 14?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to put Bill 14 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Closing comments, Minister Joanasia.

Hon. David Joanasia: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and colleagues. Again, I would like to thank the officials here before me to help support the passage of these bills. I take note to the comments made by the committee chair, in working with our counterparts in the Northwest Territories.

I thank the members for their consideration, and have a good day. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The officials may leave the witness table. I ask members to stay in your seats before we move on to the next bill.

Bill 19 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act – Consideration in Committee

We can now resume. Minister Kusugak, do you have officials you would like to appear before the committee?

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

Chairman: Does the committee agree to let officials appear before you?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: The officials may enter. For the record, Minister Kusugak, please introduce your officials and then proceed to your opening comments. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Dan Young, Deputy Assistant Deputy Minister of Finance, and to my right is Mr. Jeff Chown, Deputy Minister of Finance.

Mr. Chairman, today I am presenting Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*, for your consideration.

Bill 19 will amend legislation to implement a new refundable tax credit for individuals that returns carbon tax revenues directly to Nunavummiut.

Mr. Chairman, these amendments are required as a result of the cancellation of the Nunavut Carbon Rebate by March 31, 2023. The Nunavut Carbon Rebate was originally introduced to provide Nunavummiut a direct at-the-pump rebate on the price of certain carbon-based fuels, like gasoline and home heating fuel.

In early 2022, the Government of Canada informed the Government of Nunavut that as a result of its new carbon pricing regime, programs such as our Nunavut Carbon Rebate

would no longer be tolerated, as it interferes with the market price signals meant to create an incentive to reduce reliance on carbon fuels.

Mr. Chairman the Government of Nunavut strongly opposed the federal government's decision to no longer allow the at-the-pump rebate. As Nunavummiut we are disproportionately affected by climate change, higher prices of consumer goods and have fewer options for non-carbon fuels to power our homes and hunting equipment.

Despite our best efforts, however, Nunavut had no other choice but to cancel the current rebate program. Were we not to cancel this rebate, the revenues collected through the federal carbon tax would no longer be directly returned to Nunavut to allocate to our own carbon pricing programs. Instead, the federal government would provide payments to Nunavummiut and other projects of their choosing.

Mr. Chairman, our government believe it's important that Nunavut decides how best to use carbon taxes collected here. This is why we are proposing through Bill 19 to introduce a new program that directly supports Nunavummiut who will face higher fuel prices in the coming months.

The Nunavut Carbon Credit is a new refundable tax credit that will issue quarterly payments to Nunavut tax filers and their dependants through the Canada Revenue Agency. Nunavummiut will not have to apply for this benefit; filing a tax return will initiate this benefit. Mr. Chairman, a tax credit is an attractive option because it is the simplest and most effective way to get cash to the greatest number of people.

Mr. Chairman, Finance estimates this new tax credit to cost approximately \$12 million annually. The intention of the proposed tax credit is to be revenue-neutral.

Mr. Chairman, if Bill 19 receives the support of this House, Finance is anticipating to begin issuing Nunavut Carbon Credit payments to Nunavummiut as early as July 1, 2023.

Because the new Nunavut Carbon Credit would not begin paying out funds until July 1, I intend to utilize some of the remaining carbon tax revenues to fund the 2023 Homeowner Fuel Rebate, a one-time \$1,000 payment to homeowners who occupy their home as their principal residence.

This fuel rebate along with the new Nunavut Carbon Credit proposed in Bill 19 are two examples of how our government is providing relief to Nunavummiut on the higher costs of fuel, while also participating in national carbon pricing and climate change initiatives.

With that, Mr. Chairman, my staff and I are here to answer any questions you may have related to Bill 19. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, minister. (interpretation ends) Does the chair of the standing committee have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I wish to make some opening comments as the Committee of the Whole begins its consideration of Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*.

The standing committee recognizes the overall purpose of the bill, which the minister described in his opening comments.

The standing committee shares the minister's disappointment at the recent federal decision which has led to the premature termination of the Nunavut Carbon Rebate Program, which was originally introduced in recognition of the limited options that Nunavummiut have in our extreme environment to reduce consumption of such essential products as home heating fuel.

The standing committee notes that the recently approved 2023-24 Main Estimates of the Department of Finance include \$12.0 million in funding for the new carbon credit program. Information provided to the standing committee by the sponsoring minister indicates that under the new carbon credit program, approximately 46 percent of carbon tax revenues will be paid directly to residents of the territory through quarterly payments, 27 percent will be allocated towards the cost of previously approved tax measures and 27 percent will be "retained by the Government of Nunavut to cover the carbon tax paid through its operations."

Given that the federal carbon tax is projected to rise to \$170 per tonne in the year 2030, it is unclear how the "split" between the three expenditure categories will change over the next seven years. Consequently, it is important the government report annually to the Legislative Assembly on the administration of the new program.

This concludes my opening comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Do members have general comments? Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have a similar sentiment to the Chair on this particular matter. I do support the bill and it is very unfortunate that we find ourselves in this position and the early termination of the at-the-pump rebate due to the federal government is going to have a significant impact to all Nunavummiut on April 1 once the at-the-pump rebate ends as well as the new carbon tax rate increase.

I do recognize, as the minister had stated, that a new homeowner fuel rebate will be provided, \$1,000 one-time payment to homeowners, who occupy their home as a principle residence. That amount will be greatly appreciated by all who receive it. However, in certain instances, that might not even equate to one refuelling of a home heating tank.

I have been encouraging the government to provide more support to homeowners, and the minister has indicated that is another initiative that he is looking into, I do understand that

this is beyond the scope of this bill. However, I do support the bill. As the minister has stated, it will allow the Government of Nunavut to make its own decisions on how to utilize the carbon tax revenues.

To date, I believe the only initiative that has been utilizing these carbon tax revenues is QEC \$2 million to replace the street lights in our communities. However, I do hope to see these carbon tax revenues be utilized in more meaningful methods. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are there any more general comments? (interpretation) There are none. (interpretation ends) Go to your legislation binder on Bill 19.

Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Like Mr. Lightstone, I note the number of increases in fuel costs to Nunavummiut in the last year, starting last April 1st, between 11 and 13 cents a litre, between different fuel classes. December 4, of 2022, 20 cents a litre increase. February 6, another 8 cent a litre increase. We're already at about 40 cents a litre, and we still have an April 1st increase set to come.

Mr. Chairman, the Nunavut carbon rebate of 50 percent reduction of carbon tax at the pump was intended as a temporary transition measure, and was set to expire on its own in 2028. However, the Government of Canada has recently indicated that it will no longer tolerate the Nunavut carbon rebate, as it interferes with their carbon price market signals. As the Chairman, and Mr. Lightstone mentioned, I am disappointed in that decision from the federal government. I thought the carbon tax rebate at the pump was the best way of providing relief to the obvious users of fuel.

Mr. Chairman, the department's legislative proposal indicated that the Government of Nunavut, if the Government of Nunavut "does not repeal the Nunavut carbon rebate, the Government of Canada will consider Nunavut to be non-complaint, and will not return carbon revenues to the Government of Nunavut." Can the minister describe what other options the department considered prior to developing the proposed new Nunavut Credit Program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There really was not a lot of options, other than increasing the carbon credit. Our office had to take a very quick look and seeing what was the smallest impact it could have on Nunavummiut, Mr. Chairman. This was the formula that we came up with, at this time, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I know in the past for carbon tax credit programs, there was a call out to different departments. Can the minister describe some of the submissions that other departments made to access these carbon credits? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Mr. Young respond to those particular details, through you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Mr. Young, please proceed.

Mr. Young: Thanks for the question. By the time we received formal notice from the federal government that we were not going to be able to get an exemption to keep the Nunavut Carbon Rebate, the timeline was quite short. We spoke with the Department of Environment to see if they had any programs that they were ready to bring forward. At that time we didn't have time for a formal callout across the government. This was in late 2022 and we really had to get something in place to have something ready for the April 1 repeal.

Environment didn't have any new programs ready. They did seek some additional funding for their cabin energy programs, so they were given that, but we have made a commitment to work with them going forward in future years, starting with this current budget cycle to take ideas from them on how we can use some of this money. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On that note, I would hope that there would be an open call for proposals from all members of cabinet to make submissions.

Mr. Chairman, a number of Canadian jurisdictions have implemented their own standalone carbon tax regimes. Was this option considered by the minister's department and what were his conclusions regarding this feasibility? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ensure that we have a callout to all of the departments to partake in this.

In terms of the question, Mr. Chairman, that was done back in 2018 to take a look at different options, but our revenues are so small on that front that those options weren't viable for us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, the minister's recent correspondence to the standing committee of February 21, 2023, less than a month ago, included a number of additional documents, including the Minister of Environment's letter of September 21, 2022 to his federal counterpart.

Mr. Chairman, in his letter, Minister Akeeagok wrote that the Government of Nunavut "...proposes that the Nunavut Carbon Rebates revenue recycling be replaced by the territory's participation in the Canada Revenue Agency's climate action incentive payment program. It is fully my intention to discontinue the Nunavut Carbon Rebate and rely on the climate action incentive payment program."

However, in an email dated October 06, 2022 the Minister of Finance's department indicated that "...in conversation since then, with Finance Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency, it turns out that is not a possibility and we have now pivoted to an approach through the GST/HST program."

Can the minister clarify why the Government of Nunavut changed its position concerning participation in the Climate Action Incentive payment program? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) For the sake of the interpreters, can you slow down your reading? Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If that would have been the case, the monies would not have been made available to us. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) George Hickes, when you are reading, can you slow down a bit? Thank you.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can the minister describe what parameters of that program made Nunavummiut ineligible to access? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Mr. Young respond, through your Chair, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Young, please proceed.

Mr. Young: Thanks for the question. When the letter you referenced was sent to Environment and Climate Change Canada, it was our understanding from direction we received from officials in that department that we could set some of the parameters around the Climate Action Incentive payment program. They're not as familiar with the program as their colleagues at Finance Canada, so when we did get around to speaking Finance Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency, they informed us that we didn't have

any possibility of holding back some of the total pot of money to pay for the programs that we had already put in place, including the tree tax credits we put in place previously in 2018-2019. So those would have had to be funded elsewhere.

Our intention all along, when we went down this path, was to join into the Canada's Climate Action Incentive Payment program, with the caveat that we could keep some of that money aside to pay for the other programs that were already blessed in this House. When we got down to it, that wasn't a possibility, it was an all or nothing approach. So the direction that Finance Canada pushed us towards, and we eventually took this path, is essentially just like the Climate Action Incentive Payment program, with the caveat that we kept some money aside for these other programs. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank Mr. Young and the minister for that response. Mr. Chairman, in that correspondence from February 21, 2023 the minister stated "...unlike the GST/HST program, the Nunavut Carbon Credit will not be reduced as an individual's income increases. Individuals who currently receive the GST/HST credit will receive an additional amount lumped in with their quarterly payments for the Nunavut Carbon Credit. Individuals whose income disqualifies them from the GST/HST rebate, but who are otherwise eligible, will begin to receive a quarterly payment for the Nunavut Carbon Credit through the same mechanism."

My question is: in the department's discussions with Canada Revenue Agency, can the minister confirm if these payments would be considered taxable income? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you for that question, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate the line of questioning as it clarifies to the listening public out there the implications and amounts that I'm sure we're going to get to in a moment, but no Mr. Chairman, there will be no taxes put on any of this money being proposed through this bill, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the minister's acknowledgement that these questions are to highlight the information for the public that are listening. Often, we through in here and behind the scenes we do a lot of work, but that's not in the public realm. I'm trying to make sure that everyone out there understands why we're looking at this legislation and we'll likely approve it today, but I just want to clarify some points.

Mr. Chairman, in the minister's correspondence again on that February 21, 2023 minister indicated "estimates that there will be about 38,900 recipients of the Nunavut carbon

rebate in 2023. This number includes all tax filers and the dependents that they have listed on their tax returns. The proposed Nunavut Carbon Credit is universal, and will not vary based on the recipient's income. All credits will be paid to one member of each family who reside in the same household. For example, if a family has two parents and one child, one parent will receive credit for all three individuals. Unrelated adults (roommates) or extended family members who live in the same household would receive their own credit."

My question to the minister is: who's responsibility will it be to determine which tax filer receives the payments- the Canada Revenue Agency or the Department of Finance?
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That would be the Canada Revenue Agency, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I thank the minister for that clarification. Just to follow up on that same topic, if the tax filers in a two-tax-filer household are not married, how is this situation made known to the Canada Revenue Agency? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In any household where Revenue Canada asks who is responsible for the children, if I am living with a spouse and I have two children, and let's say they are twins at five-years old, and I'm living with a spouse that would not claim those two children, I would benefit through the Revenue Canada Agency, and my spouse or companion would file their own taxes and would benefit that portion to themselves directly. That is decided by Revenue Canada when they fill out their taxes in that way, if that makes sense, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you. It actually kind of confused me. Maybe I'll give another example that the minister kind of talked about.

If the tax filer is in a two-tax filer household; they're married with dependent children, will it be the case that one tax filer will receive payment and their dependent children and the other tax filer will receive no payment? Just to get that clarification. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister Kusugak, please clarify.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Mr. Chairman, if they file that way and they are a family unit, yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you. That does raise a concern when we talk about financial abuse that that does happen all across the world. It definitely does. You can see, at the end of the month, when we talk about elder abuse; one person in the family holding the purse strings. It gives an opportunity to have some awkward scenarios, but I'll leave that topic alone. It's not really the place for this legislation.

Mr. Chairman, the Government of Nunavut has publicly announced that this new program "Will offer direct payments every three months, starting in July, to help Nunavummiut offset higher fuel costs.

In the event that Bill 19 was to be passed in the spring sitting, can the minister confirm; I thought I caught it in his comments earlier, that payments would begin this coming July? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That is correct. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Hickes, are you done?

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to make a comment at the end of this. I do understand the need and the pressure that was put on the minister through the Government of Canada to come up with a solution in a very short period of time, but I just want to strongly encourage the minister and his cabinet colleagues to really look at other ways to maximize benefit or minimize the impact of the carbon tax system on the actual users.

I do recognize that this blanket payment that is going to happen, everyone gets the same amount regardless of how much fuel they actually go through. It wasn't really the intent, but it's through necessity, I feel, that this Act and legislation is being put into place. There are people much smarter than me out there that I'm hoping will come up with solutions down the future that some of the carbon offset or carbon credits can be utilized to make an impact to the people who are most impacted by a high fuel cost. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. That was just a comment.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Would you like to respond? Are there any further questions? I suppose there are none.

Bill 19. *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*. Clause 1. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 3. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 4. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 5. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 6. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to Bill 19?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to put Bill 19 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Closing comments, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I take this opportunity through you, Mr. Chairman, I know the public is very curious in terms of these quarterly payments and how much they are going to be. I will attempt, Mr. Chairman.

Please note that this is the first round of payments and those payments would be adjusted annually, but for an example, it will be \$308 per Nunavummiuq a year. It will be distributed quarterly, which is \$77 per person quarterly. Simple math, if there is a couple with two children, they would be getting \$308 quarterly paycheque for the next year and that number might fluctuate as numbers and money begins to grow or decrease, but that's the plan with this.

At this time, Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to include that in the closing statements because we haven't really talked about the numbers, but it will be approximately \$308 a year per person per Nunavummiuq and that's every child to the oldest person, Mr. Chairman. I'll leave it at that.

I appreciate your support for this. We understand we could do better and we will continue to look for ways to make better in terms of this Act and others that come in working with the Carbon Rebate Program, Mr. Chairman. If there are any suggestions out there, I would appreciate to hear them.

Thank you for your time and I thank my staff for the hard work they are doing with this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Those are my closing comments.

>>Applause

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Officials may leave and we're going to take a 15-minute break before the final bill.

>>Committee recessed at 14:52 and resumed at 15:13

Bill 20 – An Act to Amend the Public Service Act – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: I would like to call this committee back to order. I would like to ask the minister: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Minister?

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: Yes, I do.

Chairman: Does the committee agree to let the minister's officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: The officials may enter. For the record, Minister Nakashuk, please introduce your officials, then proceed to your opening comments. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. On my right is Les Hickey, he is my Deputy Minister of Human Resources. On my left is Terry Letourneau, (interpretation ends) I'm sorry if I said it wrong. (interpretation) He is a judge and also a French interpreter.

Good afternoon (interpretation ends) Mr. Chairman. I am here today to present, Bill 20, the *Public Service Act*.

Bill 20, an *Act to Amend the Public Service Act* seeks to correct a discrepancy between the French and English versions of the *Public Service Act*. The French version only provides for a full day to be declared as a holiday. In contrast, the English version allows for a full day or part of a day.

Section 27(1)(m) of the *Public Service Act* addresses the matter of holidays for the public service. It states that a holiday for the public service includes, "any other day or part of a day fixed by order of the Minister as a holiday for all or any part of the public service."

Mr. Chairman, in advance of the papal visit to Iqaluit in July 2022, the Premier requested that all employees of the Government of Nunavut receive a half day of leave which required the Government of Nunavut to pass a Statutory Instrument declaring noon to midnight of July 29, 2022 a statutory holiday for the public service in recognition of the papal visit.

In preparing that Statutory Instrument, the Department of Justice advised the Department of Human Resources of a discrepancy between the English and French language versions of paragraph 27(1)(m) of the *Public Service Act*, noting that although both versions are equally authoritative, the language within the French version only provides for a full day to be declared a holiday while the English version allows for a full day or part of a day.

The Department of Human Resources worked with the Legislation Division of the Department of Justice to draft Bill 20 amending paragraph 27(1)(m) of the *Public Service Act* to ensure consistent language and meaning between the French and English versions. The proposed amendment is consistent with problem solving an issue, and fits under Qanuqtuurniq: being innovative and resourceful, and Pijitsirniq: serving and providing for family or community.

Bill 20 will fix this discrepancy and ensure consistency between the intent of both the English and French versions and remove any concerns that could lead to future legal ambiguity. This amendment also prevents potential costs associated with potential court challenges around legal ambiguity.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my opening comments and I welcome questions and comments from members. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Does the Chair of the standing committee have opening comments? Please proceed, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As Chair of the Standing Committee on Legislation, I wish to make some very brief opening comments as the Committee of the Whole begins its consideration of Bill 20, *An Act to Amend the Public Service Act*.

The standing committee recognizes the overall purpose of the bill, which the minister described in her opening comments. This is non-contentious, technical piece of legislation.

This concludes my opening comments. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Are there general comments from the members? Any questions? (interpretation) Hearing none. (interpretation ends) Please go to your legislative binders. Bill 20. I'll give the members a few more minutes. Bill 20, *An Act to Amend the Public Service Act*. Clause 1. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Clause 2. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to Bill 20.

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to put Bill 20 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk, do you have closing comments?

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for passing this legislation. We want to have everything in order and there are amendments that were required. Sometimes it takes longer than others, but in July 2022, a holiday was declared for government employees. We will ensure we will conclude whatever needs to be done. I thank the Premier for supporting this bill so that our employees can take that day off.

I would also like to thank the Departments of Justice and Human Resources. Thank you.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) As we have concluded all of the bills in the Committee of the Whole, I will now rise to report to the Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Before I go to Item 20, I would like to apologize to our Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaerner, for missing him during question period. My apologies to you. Item 20. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Malliki.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Can you hear me? (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bills 12, 14, 19, and 20 and would like to report that Bills 12, 14, 19, and 20 are immediately ready for third reading, pursuant to Rule 73. Mr. Speaker, I move that the report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Mr. Kaerner. The motion is in order. To the motion. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried.

Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. There will be four bills requiring third reading. Bill 12. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Item 21: Third Reading of Bills

Bill 12 – An Act to Amend the Commissioner’s Land Act – Third Reading

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Pangnirtung, that Bill 12, *An Act to Amend the Commissioner’s Land Act*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 12 is ready for assent. Bill 14. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Bill 14 – An Act to Amend the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act – Third Reading

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Pangnirtung, that Bill 14, *An Act to Amend the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 14 is ready for assent. Bill 19. Hon. Minister of Finance, Minister Kusugak.

Bill 19 – An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act – Third Reading

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, that Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 19 is ready for assent. Bill 20. Hon. Minister of Human Resources, Minister Nakashuk.

Bill 20 – An Act to Amend the Public Service Act – Third Reading

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for South Baffin, that Bill 20, *An Act to Amend the Public Service Act*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The motion is in order. All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 20 is ready for assent.

Mr. Innuksuk, will you please ascertain that the Commissioner of Nunavut is prepared to enter the Chamber to give assent to the bills.

Assent to Bills

Commissioner Eva Qamaniq Aariak (interpretation): Members, please be seated.

As Commissioner of Nunavut, I am pleased to give assent to the following bills:

- Bill 12, *An Act to Amend the Commissioner's Land Act*;
- Bill 14, *An Act to Amend the Northern Employee Benefits Services Pension Plan Act*;
- Bill 16, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2022-2023*;
- Bill 17, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 1, 2023-2024*;
- Bill 18, *Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-2024*;
- Bill 19, *An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act*;
- Bill 20, *An Act to Amend the Public Service Act*; and
- Bill 21, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 3, 2022-2023*.

Those are the bills.

People of Nunavut, I wish you the very best for the upcoming spring season.

I join with all Nunavummiut in celebrating the success of our athletes and performers at the recent Arctic Winter Games.

>>*Applause*

I was very proud of them and it was fun to watch them in action.

As night turns to day, the time of cold gives way to the seasons of warmth.

As you prepare to return to your constituencies and families, I wish you safe travels.
Thank you.

>>*Applause*

Speaker: Before I go to Item 22, I have a few people that I would like to thank. Our Inuktitut interpreters, thank you very much for all your help for making people understand what we say in this House.

>> *Applause*

Mary Nashook, Blandina Tulugarjuk, Andrew Dialla, and Jacopoosie Peter.

>> *Applause*

And Inuinnaqtun interpreters, (interpretation) I thank you very much. Eva Ayalik.

>> *Applause*

Attima Hadlari.

>> *Applause*

James Panioyak.

>> *Applause*

And our Sergeant-at-Arms, Eemeelayou Arnaquq.

>> *Applause*

Our pages, Alexis Vincent-Wolfe...

>> *Applause*

...who was also our youngest Sergeant-at-Arms for a couple of days.

>> *Applause*

And Cameron Ipeelie.

>> *Applause*

I would also like to thank Glen Rutland for assisting us over the past two days.

>> *Applause*

I would also like to thank the Legislative Assembly of the NWT for helping us during our entire winter sitting.

I would also like to thank our own staff of the Legislative Assembly, keeping us informed and keeping us in line.

>>Applause

And our own Mr. Clerk, Mr. Quirke, who was always working behind the scenes, even though he was not sitting in the House. Thank you.

>>Applause

I would like to thank all you members, Members of the Legislative Assembly, for working for the last four long weeks. I hope you all have a good spring and I will see you when we come back again. (interpretation) I thank you.

>>Applause

(interpretation ends) Item 22. *Orders of the Day*. Mr. Rutland.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Mr. Rutland: *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Speaker. *Orders of the Day*, Wednesday, May 24, 2023, 1:30 p.m.:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements
3. Members' Statements
4. Returns to Oral Questions
5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery
6. Oral Questions
7. Written Questions
8. Returns to Written Questions
9. Replies to Opening Address
10. Petitions
11. Responses to Petitions
12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters
13. Tabling of Documents
14. Notices of Motions
15. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills
16. Motions

17. First Reading of Bills
18. Second Reading of Bills
19. Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
20. Report of the Committee of the Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

>>*Applause*

Speaker: Thank you. This House stands adjourned until Wednesday, May 24, 2023, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 15:35*

