

NUNAVUT HANSARD

UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

MONDAY, MAY 29, 2023

IQALUIT, NUNAVUT

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Corrections:

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Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

Hon. Tony Akoak

(Gjoa Haven)

Hon. David Akeegok

(Quttiktuq)

Minister of Economic Development and Transportation; Minister of Justice; Minister responsible for Labour

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

Bobby Anavilok

(Kugluktuk)

Janet Brewster

(Iqaluit-Sinaa)

Hon. Pamela Gross

(Cambridge Bay)

Deputy Premier; Minister of Culture and Heritage; Minister of Education; Minister of Languages; Minister responsible for Seniors

George Hickes

(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole

Hon. David Joanasie

(South Baffin)

Government House Leader; Minister of Community and Government Services; Minister responsible for the Utility Rates Review Council

Joelie Kaernerik

(Amittuq)

Mary Killiktee

(Uqqummiut)

Hon. Lorne Kusugak

(Rankin Inlet South)

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

Adam Lightstone

(Iqaluit-Manirajak)

Hon. John Main

(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Minister of Health; Minister responsible for Suicide Prevention

Solomon Malliki

(Aivilik)

Deputy Chair, Committee of the Whole

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

Karen Nutarak

(Tununiq)

Daniel Qavvik

(Hudson Bay)

Hon. Joanna Quassa

(Aggu)

Minister of Energy; Minister of Environment; Minister responsible for Nunavut Arctic College

Inagayuk Quqqiaq

(Netsilik)

Alexander Sammurtok

(Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet)

Joe Savikataaq

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Iqaluit, Nunavut
Monday, May 29, 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 Joanase, 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 13:29*

Item 1: Opening Prayer

Speaker (Hon. Tony Akoak)(interpretation): Before we begin, Mr. Anavilok, can you say the opening prayer, please.

>>*Prayer*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Good day to my colleagues. (interpretation ends) I hope you had a good weekend, everyone.

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

Item 2: Ministers' Statements

Minister's Statement 234 – 6(2): Long-term Care in Nunavut

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day, my colleagues.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health is committed to meeting the needs of our elders and helping them age closer to home.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, many Nunavummiut care for their elderly family members who have complex needs, chronic illness, or disabilities; however, the caregiving process can be lengthy and demanding. Home care services are a support that Health provides to help keep elders at home for as long as possible. When an elder's needs exceed the at-home capacity, long-term care is provided to Nunavummiut free of charge for as long as needed.

Currently under construction, the Rankin Inlet Long-term Care Centre will increase our in-territory capacity significantly. This 24-bed territorial long-term care facility is scheduled for completion in late fall 2023. Between February and April 2024, we are planning to admit some elders currently being cared for out-of-territory at Embassy West in Ottawa.

The Rankin Inlet Long-term Care Centre is part of the first phase of growing our in-territory senior care capacity. We also plan to construct a new facility in Cambridge Bay and one in Iqaluit and are in discussions with the Nunasi Corporation with regard to a potential partnership for these future facilities.

Uqaqtitsijii, we are also working to enhance the programming in existing facilities. In February 2023, three members of the recreation therapy team from Cambridge Bay, Gjoa Haven, and Igloolik received in-person training, knowledge sharing, and mentoring in Yellowknife at the AVENS long-term care campus. This training has enhanced recreation programs in the continuing care centres and has seen our staff involve seniors in new activities.

We are also continuing to work with our partners at Nunavut Arctic College as they develop a personal support worker certificate program. This program will create and produce skilled employees who will be in demand for work at long-term care facilities and home care programs throughout the territory. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Minister's Statement 235 – 6(2): Guidance Counsellor

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* and good day to everybody in Nunavut and everyone here in the House with us today.

Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to announce that through the changes we have made to our staff funding formula, the Department of Education has designated funding to hire one guidance counsellor in every high school across Nunavut.

This is exciting news because before this funding was in place, district education authorities and schools had to make a tough decision whether to use funding to hire a teacher or a guidance counsellor. Most went with teachers to provide more course applications for students.

Mr. Speaker, guidance counsellors provide a bridge for students to further education and career opportunities. They provide important information about choosing the right courses that align with their interests and potential career paths. They help students navigate the application process for universities, colleges, or other training they might be interested in. Guidance counsellors also direct students to the *ilinniarvimmi inuusilirijit*, or school community counsellors, who provide wellness counselling.

We currently only have a handful of guidance counsellors across the territory. We're looking forward to hiring more people into this much-needed position and giving students another avenue for success. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Minister's Statement 236 – 6(2): Lottery Administration Training

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

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to share that the Consumer Affairs Section recently conducted lottery administration training in the communities of Baker Lake, Igloolik, and Sanirajak. On behalf of the Consumer Affairs Section, I would like to express my gratitude to the hamlets for their warm and generous hospitality.

Mr. Speaker, in the essence of Pilimmaksarniq, the training involved clarifying roles and responsibilities of charitable and religious organizations in conducting lotteries under the Criminal Code, *Lotteries Act* and its regulations. It also included increased attention on financial reporting and accountability.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the response we have received from dedicated community members was promising and it will enable Consumer Affairs to establish ongoing, consistent support to municipalities and organizations that hold lotteries. We hope that these lotteries enable them to provide and support community-based needs.

Mr. Speaker, Consumer Affairs plans to conduct more in-community trainings and is currently collaborating with the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs through their Government Liaison Officer Program to increase support available to both delegated and non-delegated communities. We look forward to strengthening relationships with stakeholders and improving our service delivery. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Environment, Ms. Quassa.

Minister's Statement 237 – 6(2): Improvements to the Wolf Sample Collection Program

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good day to my colleagues and visitors in the gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform the House of the new improvements to my department's Wolf Sample Collection Program. This program compensates harvesters for submitting skulls, skin samples, and harvest information from wolves that they have harvested.

It was introduced as a pilot program in 2018 in a few communities and then expanded to all of Nunavut in 2019. Under the old program harvesters were paid \$300 for every sample submitted out of our Support for Active Harvesters budget.

Mr. Speaker, under the recently approved program, harvesters will get paid an increased amount of \$500 for samples submitted from harvested wolves across Nunavut. In some areas where caribou populations are in decline, such as Bluenose, Bathurst and Dolphin-Union herds, this payment will be \$900 for each sample.

This program now has a dedicated budget of \$500,000 per year, which is allocated to pay hunters for submitting the skull, skin, and harvest information from wolves that they have harvested. We have started to streamline the process in which hunters receive their money. The improvements of the program will not only get the harvesters their money faster, but also improve the ability of my department to monitor the budget and track all sample payments, improving our financial accountability.

Mr. Speaker, my department is committed to enhancing the support for harvesters provided to Nunavummiut with financial opportunities to be able to offset the increasing costs of being an active harvester, while also providing valuable information to our wildlife biologists. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Minister's Statement 238 – 6(2): Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Agreement

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am very pleased to announce today that my department has signed the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership Agreement with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and our provincial and territorial counterparts.

Nunavut's harvesting and processing sector will receive \$3.05 million in additional investments in areas such as harvesting-related research, training, infrastructure development, food security, and green energy initiatives. The agreement came into effect on April 1, 2023 and will extend into March 2028.

The priorities of the partnership agreement align very closely with strategic priorities set out by our government under *Katuujiluta*. It includes enabling health and healing, reinvesting in education, and diversifying our local economies in ways that reflect Inuit societal values and *Inuit piqqusingit iliqqusingillu aturlugit*.

I encourage communities and community organizations that are interested in applying for program assistance under the Country Food Distribution Program to contact our local

economic development officers in their community. They can also reach my department through our regional offices in the Kitikmeot, Kivalliq, and Qikiqtaaluk. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Minister's Statement 239 – 6(2): Meeting with Minister Qualtrough

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon and I say “good day” to Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the Department of Family Services recognizes the urgent need to enhance and further develop pre-employment training opportunities for Nunavummiut. With this goal in mind, I recently met with Hon. Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion as part of the “Nunavut on the Hill” event in Ottawa.

During the meeting, I advised Minister Qualtrough that we are seeking a supplemental Labour Market Transfer Agreement to fund the additional costs to raise literacy and education rates for Nunavut Inuit to better align with the national average. The department hopes to use these additional funds to place literacy and numeracy professionals and career development officers in each of Nunavut's communities to help prepare Nunavummiut to access pre-employment training opportunities.

We also discussed how my department can further increase support for persons with disabilities in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, our discussions were productive, and I look forward to working more closely with Minister Qualtrough as we fulfil the priorities in the *Katujjiluta* mandate. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Ministers' Statements. Hon. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Minister's Statement 240 – 6(2): Qulliq Energy Corporation's New Baker Lake Head Office Open for Business

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Good afternoon and thank you, Mr. Speaker and fellow MLAs. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the Qulliq Energy Corporation is excited to announce that the corporation's brand-new head office in Baker Lake is open for business. The utility's administrative employees and services are now available at 3091 6th Street for those customers wishing to pay their bills or make enquiries in person.

Its construction is a testament to the QEC's significant investment in better serving customers across the territory and supporting the local community.

Mr. Speaker, the new facility also marks an important milestone for the corporation and its employees. With the introduction of a unified and organized work environment, it will better benefit staff experience and demonstrates the corporation's commitment to building spaces that improve conditions and morale. Mr. Speaker, the benefits of effectively occupying one space is already evidenced in comfortable office accommodations and energy-efficient technology intended to minimize the QEC's environmental impact.

The corporation continues to aim for an Energy Star building certification for this state-of-the-art facility. If successful after a 12-month assessment period, it will be the first of its kind in Canada's northern territories to achieve this status. Mr. Speaker, the building's careful, creative and responsible design work focused on unique features using affordable building materials and equipment. Long-lasting environmental and financial benefits include reducing greenhouse gas emissions and saving on building operation and maintenance costs.

The corporation would like to thank the community of Baker Lake for its patience during the head office construction and for welcoming such an important facility, vital to providing a critical service. Our gratitude is also extended to the QEC employees for their continued support in making this transition possible. I look forward to the official opening and celebration of such a historical moment in Baker Lake, one that will have a long-lasting impact on local and territorial customers. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Item 3. Members' Statements. Member for Aivilik, Mr. Malliki.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 304 – 6(2): Congratulations to Coral Harbour Recipients of the Nunavut Commissioner's Awards

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to start off with this announcement, as my paternal grandfather is celebrating his birthday, and he just turned 90 years old. I wanted to voice my pride in his reaching his 90th birthday.

>>Applause

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a number of constituents in Coral Harbour who received the Nunavut Commissioner's Awards.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, in my member's statement during Friday's sitting, I had the honour of recognizing several of my constituents in Naujaat for also receiving the Commissioner's Awards.

Mr. Speaker, in December 2022, Nunavut Commissioner Eva Aariak travelled to Coral Harbour for the Commissioner's Awards ceremony.

Recipients of these awards include the principal and teacher from Sakku School, a youth role model, community members, volunteers, the search and rescue team, volunteer firefighters, elders who are recognized knowledge keepers, as well as individuals who demonstrate bravery and survival instincts during a time of need.

Mr. Speaker, time does not permit for me to recognize all 82 of my constituents by name, but I appreciate every one of the recipients whose efforts each make a positive impact in Coral Harbour.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to express gratitude and appreciation to Commissioner Eva Aariak for travelling to Coral Harbour to recognize our dedicated community members.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members to join me in congratulating Coral Harbour recipients of the Commissioner's award. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Tununiq, Ms. Nutarak.

Member's Statement 305 – 6(2): Hockey Activity in Pond Inlet

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I too wish to recognize an individual from Pond Inlet who is part of the recreation committee.

On April 29 to May 1, a hockey tournament was arranged in the community with teams being grouped together with members from the women, men, girls' and boys' hockey teams, with four different teams compiled from these groups.

Mr. Speaker, it became a very enjoyable tournament as we observed the different teams playing against each other, as every team tried their best to beat the other side. The team who came in first place was the Narwhals, the second-place team was the White Huskies, and third place was the Blue Huskies team, and the fourth-place team was Amaruit.

Mr. Speaker, this tournament was especially beneficial to the younger hockey players, as they played against older players, and the games were very entertaining. Further, regular citizens and parents organized a food court, providing snacks and food using their own funds, and after every game, the players were fed by this group.

I especially wish to voice my appreciation, as after the tournament, the arena was closed due to the warming temperatures and this was the last scheduled hockey set of games, and it turned out to be a great season-ending tournament for our local community. I send my appreciation to the organizers as they provide various entertainment regimes in our community.

I just wanted to voice my acknowledgement of the organizers as they are providing some good activities in our community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Member's Statement 306 – 6(2): Problems with Adoption Process

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to address serious concerns regarding the adoption process here in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, the process is too lengthy as adoption officials are rarely available to resolve issues related to filling out the required paperwork and it is becoming disconcerting to the parents in trying to get them legally registered. Some children are reaching their first birthday prior to having the adoption legalized, as the paperwork is not being completed.

Further, the legal naming of the adopted child to the adoptive parents' name is not being registered, but there seems to be no accountability since no reasons are provided for the interminable delays in this process of legal adoptions in our communities.

Mr. Speaker, due to this matter and the snail pace of this process, it is creating significant issues for some families, especially when the adopted parents are denied the additional funds for their adopted child, and this is atop of the delays proving that the child is now adopted into their families. So it impacts their income assistance if the legal paperwork is delayed or not forthcoming.

Due to these issues and the delay in the adoption process, it also delays the process to apply for the child tax credits. It can also delay the process to apply for a birth certificate or social insurance number, which becomes more and more necessary as time goes on.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that most communities have custom adoption commissioners who fill out the paperwork to recognize... .

Mr. Speaker, I would like to seek unanimous consent to conclude my statement. Thank you.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are none. Please continue, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you for providing me additional time.

To start again, Mr. Speaker, I'm aware that most communities have custom adoption commissioners who fill out the paperwork to recognize that an adoption has taken place according to traditional custom.

The paperwork has to be legally registered. For those communities who do not have custom adoption commissioners, the delay in having custom adoptions recognized is even worse.

Mr. Speaker, they could be grandparents adopting their grandchild or family adopting their nieces' newborn baby. It is important that these adoptions are legally registered in order for those new parents to be able to provide for their adopted and so that the child has access to the benefits they deserve.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time I will be asking questions on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Kugluktuk, Mr. Anavilok.

Member's Statement 307 – 6(2): Condolences to Kugluktuk Family

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to my colleagues. I just want to mention to you that somebody had passed away; Jack Kaniak. My heartfelt condolences to the family and his relatives. It is very heartbreaking when you lose a loved one, but we have to move ahead. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Member's Statement 308 – 6(2): Kugaaruk Hockey Tournament

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today that on the date of March 30, 2023 to April 2, 2023, the community of Kugaaruk hosted senior men's "Tugaalik Cup" hockey tournament. I want to greatly acknowledge tournament organizer, Alex Ittimangnaq, for a well-organized hockey tournament. I was privileged to witness it and a great success it was.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the communities that took part in the tournament: Naujaat, who took home the Tugaalik Cup, 2023 champions; second place winners, Igloolik; third place, Kugaaruk Raiders. I also want to thank Taloyoak, Gjoa Haven, and Kuugaaruk Narwhalers hockey team and all volunteers and all sponsors, who are:

- Canadian North

- Kitikmeot Inuit Association
- Hamlet of Kugaaruk
- Sabina Gold and Silver
- Kuugmiut Co-op

It was a success. Mr. Speaker, also on the date of April 21 to 23, 2023, a friendship hockey tournament in Gjoa Haven for the youth, and I want to greatly acknowledge the community for their invitation to the youth of my constituent communities of Kugaaruk and Taloyoak. Kugaaruk, who sent 36 youth, and I want to thank the volunteers who contributed greatly for the youth:

- Jesse Ulliaq-Apsaktaun;
- Kelsey Apsaktaun;
- Emma Keagan;
- Richard Kakkianun;
- Jason Inutuinaq;
- Sheena Kayasark;
- Marlene Sanertanut; and
- Sheena Tinashlu.

Sponsors, minor hockey committee:

- Hamlet of Kugaaruk
- Koomiut Co-op; and
- Kitikmeot Inuit Association.

The Taloyoak youth, in which 53 youth also participated in the Friendship Tournament, and I want to thank to thank:

- Sandra Alookey;
- Sam Alookey;
- Mona Totalik;
- Pameok Pauloosie; and
- Candace Pauloosie.

Thank you, Gjoa Haven and Friendship Tournament organizers. Thank you, greatly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>*Applause*

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

Member's Statement 309 – 6(2): Happy Retirement to Three School Workers in Baker Lake

Mr. Simailak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon, colleagues. For the people of Baker Lake, have a good day.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize three individuals from Baker Lake:

- Nancy Nagyougalik
- Becky Tootoo; and
- Elizabeth Tunnuq.

These ladies have just recently announced individually that they will be retiring from their permanent workplace at the high school and one from the Rachel Arnngammaktiq Elementary School.

All three of these ladies have been contributed in many different ways throughout their careers, helping many students, parents, and other fellow teachers all along the way. Nancy is, or was a janitor. Ituvi and Becky are teachers. This will be their last school year. All three ladies have spent a few decades working in their professions.

Mr. Speaker, all three of these ladies are mothers and are also grandmothers. They will no longer need to follow the clock; they can do what they want, when they want, spend time with their family and grandchildren, go berry picking or go for rides whenever they want, and I'm very happy for them.

Thank you, ladies, for your contributions. Congratulations on your many years of service, and I ask my fellow colleagues to help me congratulate them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

Member's Statement 310 – 6(2): Katujjiluta Mandate

Mr. Kaernek (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to welcome you all. I give my regards to the people of Nunavut and my community. I would like to urge the children to be careful as the ice is starting to deteriorate. Make sure that you keep a watchful eye on your children.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the *Katujjiluta* mandate that was discussed in Cambridge Bay during a retreat. With the report that was tabled, I will be asking questions to the Premier about employment and how we can better realign the schools so that we have more participation from elders. I will be focusing on that subject and I will be asking questions on the government and the school system that is currently in place.

I would like to thank the Premier and the Minister of Education for visiting our schools in Sanirajak last spring. We also talked about all-day kindergarten classes, and if that should go ahead in my community, I'm sure that there are going to be some concerns coming from the parents and the teachers. I will be asking questions in this regard at the appropriate time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Aggu, Ms. Quassa.

Member's Statement 311 – 6(2): Happy Birthday to Uncle

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise to make a statement of an elder who is celebrating their birthday today, and in wanting to voice my gratitude, I am kind of rushing.

I rise to voice my pride as he is my paternal uncle, and ever since my first recollection I can only recall his continual professing of his love towards me, and I send him my absolute love and wish him a very happy birthday today, and wish him many more birthdays in the future. I just wanted to voice that in my statement, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Member's Statement 312 – 6(2): Commissioner's Award Recipients in Cambridge Bay

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker, and good afternoon to those in Cambridge Bay; particularly my family who are listening in.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Commissioner Aariak and her colleague, Wendy Halonen, for visiting Cambridge Bay and being in the community for a few days and being able to attend the social service bachelor of social work graduation in the community and then presenting the Commissioner's awards on March 25.

Mr. Speaker, the Commissioner's Awards are given for bravery, volunteerism, community service, special skills, and youth achievement. Nunavummiut nominate people in their community that they want to have recognized for the efforts that they have made to protect, support and strengthen communities that they live in.

I would like to make the following mention of the people of Iqaluktuuttiaq who were awarded this past March. Under the Bravery category, I would like to recognize Kenneth Okina and Leonard Epsilon. Under the Youth Recognition Award, I would like to recognize Eekeeluak Avalak. Under Long Term Community Service, Abe Evegetok and Jimmy Haniliak Senior, and Mr. Speaker, under the Knowledge Keepers Award, I would

like to acknowledge people who I have worked with in my past role as Mayor of Cambridge Bay, the Elders Advisory Committee, including:

- Jimmy Haniliak Senior;
- Eva Etegik;
- Annie Atighioyak;
- Anne Wingeck;
- Bessie Omilgoetok, and
- David Evalik.

I would also like to recognize other co-workers that I had worked with in my past role when I worked at the Kitikmeot Heritage Society. All of these elders are so invaluable in our community. I would like to recognize Annie Atighioyak, Mary Kaotalok, Bessie Omilgoetok, and Mabel Etegik.

Mr. Speaker, there is also another elder that is a great important person to me; my 95-year-old grandmother, Mr. Speaker. She is not doing so well, so I ask for prayers for her. Our family is going through a really tough time with our matriarch and we acknowledge her beautiful life she has lived, including birthing over 100 babies out on the land, Mr. Speaker.

My grannie, Ovilok Neglak is our pillar to our family.

I would also like to recognize Cambridge Bay Volunteer Firefighters for their bravery... . Oh sorry, Mr. Speaker. I ask for unanimous consent to conclude my statement.

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to conclude her statement. Are there any nays? There are none. Please continue, Ms. Gross.

Hon. Pamela Gross: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize. Mr. Speaker.

I would like to recognize the Cambridge Bay Volunteer Firefighters for their efforts. There are so many to name, and I'm sorry I don't have the list of all them here on hand, but also to the volunteer search and rescue team and the volunteer coast guard auxiliary for all of their efforts in volunteerism throughout the years. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Arviat North-Whale Cove, Mr. Main.

Member's Statement 313 – 6(2): Community Radio Operators in Arviat and Whale Cove

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good afternoon wishes to the people of Arviat and Whale Cove.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the two radio announcers so I rise today to voice my appreciation.

Mr. Speaker, due to my new ministerial portfolio, our family has now moved to Iqaluit, however, I never miss a radio show as that is my current means of communication with my constituents, and as an MLA, it requires constant communication. When I call Arviat, to the local radio show, *Arviaqpalluk*, sometimes the part-time announcer is Cecil Kinniksie or *illaittunaaq*, and he usually answers as he is very skilled, and his music selection is commendable as I like the music he plays.

Now, when I call the radio station in Whale Cove called *Isatikpalluk*, the person who usually answers and who is also part-time is actually his daughter, Melanie Kinniksie, so this father daughter tandem in two communities are the ones I wanted to recognize, as they have inherent announcing skills, and they provide beneficial radio announcing to these two communities, especially in communicating announcements, and they keep our dialect alive and this too has many benefits.

I wanted to voice my appreciation of Cecil Kinniksie and his daughter Melanie, and I thank you two for allowing me to speak to my constituents locally when I need to speak on the local radio, and for your dedication to providing an essential community service as skilled radio announcers which I hope you continue to provide. You both make great contributions to your community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

Member's Statement 314 – 6(2): Arctic Bay Hockey Tournament

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Annually, connected to this dog race, there is the Qamutik hockey tournament played at the end of the Nunavut Quest, and sometimes, some of the participants of the dog race are also on the hockey teams, and this also occurred this year.

There were four communities represented at this year's tournament, and I wanted to voice my pride in the participants who played in this year's tournament in Arctic Bay, playing for the Qamutik cup. I am also very pleased that Arctic Bay returned the cup to their community. It felt good to hear that, and I am proud of their efforts. There were two local teams from Arctic Bay, with the team called Arctic Bay Impact winning the tournament.

The captain was Moses Kigutaq, who I take pride in, along with his winning team players. There isn't just a hockey tournament as there is a community wide schedule during the organized events, and I am proud of every community hosting them. The community changes annually as the host community is where the Nunavut Quest ends at. In 2024, I hope the winning team retains the cup, as the tournament is going to be held in Pond Inlet next year.

This year, Igloolik came in second place, with the third going to Sanirajak, followed by Pond Inlet and the second team from Arctic Bay was in fifth place. We had the winning goalie who provided a rookie goalie from outside of the community his goalie pads to encourage him to continue, and I was especially proud of that goalie. They might be rivals on the ice, but afterwards there is friendship all around. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Members' Statements. Member for Pangnirtung, Ms. Nakashuk.

Member's Statement 315 – 6(2): Pangnirtung High School Graduates

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to voice my pride and to congratulate the students who will be graduating from grade 12, and local events are being organized. There are 21 graduates listed in Pangnirtung for graduation this year, and I wanted to name them publicly:

- Justin Angmarlik
- Ben Arnaq
- Alison Kilabuk
- Kailey Kilabuk
- Nolan Kuluguqtuq
- Terrence Lawson
- Charlene Qumuatuq
- Martha Joy Qaqasiq
- Ben Alivaktuk
- Kim Alivaktuk
- Maggie Akulukjuk
- Annika Akulujuk
- Reanna Kuluguqtuq
- Tasha Machmer
- Martha Nakashuk
- Makibi Nakashuk
- Rhoda Nashalik
- A.J. Nakashuk
- Janelle Keenainak
- Myra Young
- Paul Angnako

I wanted to name the students in recognition and to congratulate this large graduation class from Pangnirtung's Attagoyuk School this year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker: Thank you. Item 4. Returns to Oral Questions. Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

Return to Oral Question 440 – 6(2): Federal Funding for Shelters

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) On March 3, 2023 the Department of Family Services reached out to... . Oh, this is in regard to the question Mr. Alex Sammurtok, MLA for Rankin Inlet North and Chesterfield Inlet had asked on May 25, in regard to federal funding for shelters.

Mr. Speaker, on March 3, 2023, the Department of Family Services reached out to Chesterfield Inlet's senior administrative officer regarding the request for a safe space by community residents. The department also contacted the mayor of the community, and my officials are awaiting a response. If the hamlet wishes to pursue federal funding for a local shelter, my officials are eager to assist in identifying and applying for federal program funding opportunities. The collaborative partnership between the community and the Department of Family Services is vital to the success of these large initiatives. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Item 5. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Hon. Premier, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Item 5: Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker for allowing me to recognize someone very special. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize our Auditor General of Canada, Ms. Karen Hogan.

>>*Applause*

Ms. Hogan is in Iqaluit to release two reports into the Government of Nunavut's service delivery, which we will see tabled in this House tomorrow, Mr. Speaker. As an Officer of Parliament, Ms. Hogan's role is audit the operations of government and identify areas of improvement. She is providing our Legislative Assembly with independent information, assurance, and advice regarding the stewardship of public funds.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to welcome to Iqaluit, Ms. Hogan, and I extend the appreciation of our government for her work promoting accountability and transparency, as we strive for in our work as elected leaders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Please feel welcome.

Speaker: Welcome to the Assembly. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Welcome to the Assembly for everyone that sitting. Oral Questions. Item 6. Member for Amittuq, Mr. Kaernerck.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 462 – 6(2): Katujjiluta Mandate

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated earlier, I will be asking a question during question period as to how *Katujjiluta* is doing.

(interpretation ends) According to the *Katujjiluta* mandate, reinvesting in education on that, let me just point out a few indicators here.

On page 38 of the *Katujjiluta* report here, it states here Mr. Speaker, “Stronger childhood foundations for Inuit identity, resilience, and learning over time,” and bullet no. 2, “Higher rates of attendance and school completion.” No. 3, “Higher rates of attendance and school completion,” and the most important one; “Improved linkage between available jobs and post-secondary education and training in the territory.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I stated in my member’s statement, I would like to ask a question on this *Katujjiluta* mandate. I would like to ask the Premier: how does it work with cabinet to decide work or job initiatives that are moving forward in accordance with employment across Nunavut? How are these indicators projected when it comes to the *Katujjiluta* mandate? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank my member colleague for asking that question. If I understand the member’s question, he is asking in terms of the progress of investments that we do make in terms of the public service.

As a government, as the Premier, it is my duty to look at public service globally and to become the employer of choice. As such, as outlined in the *Katujjiluta* mandate and the reinvesting in education, we do invest heavily in terms of the work that we do in post-secondary and then the work that we do to see what we could do to bring more employment opportunities into the communities.

As I’ve noted in the past, we are looking at reviewing the decentralization policy and I look forward to providing further updates as we look into that to look at where we stand as a government of where these opportunities are. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Kaerner.

Mr. Kaerner (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I’ve heard about many ways to improve Nunavut. It states here on page 41 that, apparently, they created job positions for elders in Igloolik, Arviat, Baker Lake, and in Naujaat. A question that I’d like to ask the Premier is, as the Premier just stated about the jobs being available in the smaller communities, they are not available in the smaller communities. Jobs are not available in the smaller communities.

Did you create jobs for elders in Hall Beach too? We don't seem to have very many elders left and the question I have is, as the Premier should know, Hall Beach's school is too small. We don't have a day care. As I stated, if the full-day kindergarten goes ahead then the kindergarten teachers will be more tired now perhaps. I don't know how it's going to run, but I would like to ask: how did you allocate the positions to the communities? Why didn't you start with the smaller communities, and why did you start with the larger communities? Why didn't you start them in small communities like Sanirajak? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleague for mentioning and hosting me in Sanirajak. I really enjoyed our opportunity to visit the school, the incredible vibrant school that we did go to. I just want to thank my colleague for the invitation that came for us to be able to go into Sanirajak and to meet with the students and to meet with the public servants; the teachers that are there.

With that, Mr. Speaker, every department is responsible through the business planning process to identify positions and it does go through that. To the first question that was asked, the performance indicators that he referenced were really a snap shot in time of where we are now to allow us to be able to base where we're going. I just wanted to mention that.

Right now, we are looking and always continuing to look at options for positions outside of the communities as noted. We are reviewing the staffing for leaders, but really the question rests with the Department of Education, specifically to those positions, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Thank you.

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

Mr. Kaernerck (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not hear a response to my second question, so that led me to believe that perhaps they will not create jobs in our smaller communities.

In saying that, Mr. Speaker, I wish to query the minister with this other question, in the *Turaaqtavut* document, in the direction stated under the *Katujjiluta* document, the job descriptions listed totalled 690, for training on-the-job as previously announced, and that \$6,6 million was allocated towards this (interpretation ends) Nunavut student program (interpretation) towards people who want to learn within Nunavut.

The other matter, Mr. Speaker, on the same page, there are 219 teachers who can speak in Inuktitut and furthermore, the number 75 was for government employees who completed the *Inuit Uqausingit* language program.

Mr. Speaker, if this government is following the mandate, the numbers listed in 2021-22, are going to be based on the previous numbers under the *Katujjiluta* mandate. How

accurate are these numbers and will these numbers be assessed for their truthfulness prior to substantiation as funding commitments in future allocations? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also reiterate my thanks to the member. This is indeed a substantive matter, particularly in thinking of our elders in our communities, and how we can provide more benefits and whether we can employ them in another capacity. We are constantly reviewing it from that perspective.

In looking at the *Katujjiluta* mandate, which the member references, many of our initiatives have to be determined where the starting line is, and where we are in terms of this mandate. We need to use a foundation in order to work out the direction we wish to work towards, so these numbers are factual.

That's the direction we want and thusly why we approach you, the MLAs whenever we have an idea to turn into a certain direction financially, along with future allocations. I want to work closely with my colleagues to determine if there are other areas to direct our resources to. Right now, we're looking at elders to ensure their inclusion in resolving potential problems, and how can we accommodate the elders' knowledge more deeply.

I believe that was his real question, we just completed our consultations from the communities, and once that report is completed, we will be able to reference it further and I'll be able to work with my colleagues on these matters. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Before I go to the next person, just remember that we have everyone that wants to ask questions; make your preambles shorter, to the point, and the answers as well.

Oral Questions. Member for Baker Lake, Mr. Simailak.

Question 463 – 6(2): Replacement Health Centre for Baker Lake

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'll try to keep it short and succinct.

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

Mr. Speaker, last year the minister visited my beautiful community of Baker Lake, and I'm very glad that he had the opportunity to visit our community health centre and he saw with his own eyes how small and overcrowded it has become for my growing community.

Can the minister summarize how his department evaluates the status of Nunavut's community health centres, the condition of each facility, the growth of the community population, and other factors to determine which community health centres should be renovated, expanded, or replaced? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and I thank the member for the question. I also thank the member for welcoming us to Baker Lake.

The problem the community has with the health centre in their community is that it has not been sufficient for the community. It was built in the 1990s, and it is too small, and too old now. Baker Lake is a priority for the construction of a new community hall.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, to the question; we look at a number of different factors in terms of looking at which health centres need upgrading or replacement. We look at the age of the facility, the floor area, the population projections, and there is also facility condition that is looked at. Those are the main factors that are looked at in terms of prioritizing. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for his response. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Nunavut's five-year capital plan does not yet include a health centre project for the community of Baker Lake. However, the minister has mentioned on more than one occasion that the Baker Lake community health centre was being considered as a capital project in the near future.

Can the minister provide an update on whether the Baker Lake health centre is currently being considered for a health centre replacement project, and if there are other health centres also being considered, where is Baker Lake's project in the order of priority? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) In terms of the list of priorities, Qikiqtarjuaq is at the top right now. I think we have made that clear. I had the pleasure of bringing the federal health minister to Qikiqtarjuaq and he saw with his own eyes how inadequate and quite sad, to be frank, that facility is. Not to say that the staff and the community aren't amazing, but the infrastructure in that case is quite troubling to see with your own eyes. Baker Lake is the next facility on our list of prioritizations behind Qikiqtarjuaq, Mr. Speaker.

I want to mention that our federal partners are now well aware of the inadequacy and the existence of incredible need for more health infrastructure across Nunavut. That is talking about health centers, but also looking at long-term care, Mr. Speaker, and I am hopeful that now that they have realized how big the needs are, I am hopeful that there will be some recognition and some support from those important federal partners. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the response again. I'm glad Baker Lake is still second to Qikiqtarjuaq. I'm sure looking forward to when that can come to fruition for realization of construction.

Mr. Speaker, as the minister saw for himself, the current Baker Lake health centre is much too small for our community. When walking into the health centre, one has to walk over piles of footwear and try not to trip. There is hardly enough room for regular health services delivery, and even less room for visiting specialists. Meanwhile, the tuberculosis screening clinic is basically an oversized closet.

The community of Baker Lake continues to grow. The need for replacement of our health centre is becoming more and more desperate. Can the minister tell this House when he anticipates Baker Lake will be opening the doors of its new replacement health centre? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I know that the member won't be happy with this response, but I can't give a firm a date. I can say "as soon as possible" and "as soon as possible" depends on the available funding resources that we are able to secure, and also with the caveat that through the capital planning process, we have limited capital funds and so we put our priorities forward, but there are infrastructure needs in other areas.

Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge that the infrastructure issues in Baker Lake are ongoing. It's happening today, tomorrow, and the next day. In terms of trying to address the needs in advance of a new health centre being constructed, we are looking to repurpose the Martha Talirug Centre, which is just across the road from the health centre, to make it usable workspace, which would include some health programming, but that's a stopgap measure because we do realize the real impacts that inadequate infrastructure has on the community members. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 464 – 6(2): Grants and Contributions Program

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Culture and Heritage and they concern her department's grants and contribution program.

Mr. Speaker, a number of my constituents in Kugaaruk have shown interest in creating community-led elders and youth initiatives to help promote the transfer of traditional knowledge to the youth in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I understand and appreciate that the department's Elders and Youth Branch provides various services and supports for community-based elders and youth initiatives.

Mr. Speaker, the Elders and Youth Initiatives under the department's grants and contributions program "supports community-led program design and implementation."

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clarify if there are supports available within her department to assist elders with their applications to access her department's funding resources? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to the member for the question for his constituency of Taloyoak and Kugaaruk. I can say that the Department of Culture and Heritage has great program funding out there and has recently increased the funding pots. Under this category for elder and youth grants, the contributions have gone from a total pot of \$800,000 to over \$2.25 million. We will see a substantial increase to program funding and we have the contributions and grants available for community non-profits, hamlets, or others who wish to run programs in their community. I would like to thank those that run those very valuable community programs, Mr. Speaker.

In terms of working with elders, it's our goal that we have community liaison officers in our communities who are there to support community members. Also, the department travels to communities to work on proposal writing and teach communities how to work on proposals. Mr. Speaker, it's my understanding that the Department of Culture and Heritage will be going to Taloyoak this year to work with the community on that specific project because the Department of Culture and Heritage hasn't received applications from that community and we look forward to having community members avail from this pot of funding and the other pots of funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 18, 2022 the Department of Culture and Heritage issued a public service announcement regarding a call for grants and contributions proposals for the 2023-24 fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that the public service announcement indicates that the deadline to apply for the 2023-24 grants and contributions funding was on January 31, 2023.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm whether or not an application will still be accepted and considered if an application is submitted past the January 31 deadline? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* to our colleague for that great question. Mr. Speaker, if there is still funding available in the pot of funding that's there that hasn't been allocated to other organizations or non-profits, the department does

allocate after proposals have been received and we look forward to more communities, including his constituency, applying to these pots of funding that are available and so yes, we do when available. If they do submit after the deadline, we will take those into consideration if there is still money available for them. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On November 30, 2022 the Department of Culture and Heritage held a grants and contributions program public presentation in Naujaat. I applaud the department for holding these information sessions in communities that haven't submitted applications so they have the opportunity to learn more about what supports is available through the department's grants and contribution program.

Mr. Speaker, the department's business plan indicates that its current priority is to plan and deliver a grants and contribution session in the Kitikmeot region. The minister's predecessor had indicated in the previous winter sitting that the department was still planning what Kitikmeot community they would be holding an information session. To my understanding, they will be going to Taloyoak.

Can the minister clarify if the department can also go to the community of Kugaaruk? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. *Quana* for that question. Yes, the department is going to be planning to go to Taloyoak. As I mentioned earlier, we will be going in the coming months to Taloyoak to deliver training with stakeholders, such as working with the government liaison officer, the hamlet, and others who avail and can use this funding, such as non-profit organizations.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the other constituency community of Kugaaruk, we can't commit to that visit at this point, but we can explore that option and I can get back to the member on the availability and if we're able to do that this fiscal year. It has been noted that he would like us to visit. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 465 – 6(2): Chesterfield Inlet Airport Terminal Building

Mr. Sammurtok (interpretation): Good day to the people of Chesterfield Inlet and Rankin Inlet and Nunavummiut. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation.

As the minister is aware, the community of Chesterfield Inlet needs a new airport terminal building. This is an issue that I have raised on many occasions, and I have tabled photographs in this House that clearly show the poor condition of the current facility.

As the minister will recall, a number of unsuccessful tenders were issued in recent years for the construction of new airport terminal buildings in Chesterfield Inlet, Naujaat, and Whale Cove.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy that the most recent tender has been awarded to a company to perform this work. The tender was awarded on March 22, 2023.

Can the minister confirm the timeline for when construction will begin on Chesterfield Inlet's new airport terminal building? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, these are significant matters, which I enjoy and I thank all the members for having agreed to this supplemental funding allocation request, and this work will commence shortly.

The tenders are now closed, and this fall we anticipate the commencement of the construction phase, and if the work follows the schedule, then the work ought to be completed in two years, however, right now, I cannot state the exact completion date but, I am quite pleased the projects were agreed to and I appreciate my colleagues' approval for the additional funding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Sammurtok.

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the minister is aware, the tender was awarded for the construction of new airport terminal buildings in three different Kivalliq communities, including Chesterfield Inlet.

Can the minister confirm if the designs for all three airport terminal buildings are substantially the same? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeeagok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I can confirm, but each community went through the planning and design phase. I don't know what the difference would be within the three projects that were within the Kivalliq. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Sammurtok: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The department's request for tender for the construction of Chesterfield Inlet's new airport terminal building indicated that the minimum Inuit labour requirement for the project is 35 percent. Can the minister clarify what percentage has been committed to by the successful bidder? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Akeegok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In regard to the terms or other details, I haven't had the chance to review the terms provided to the successful bidder, however, during the planning phase they listed 35 percent as the lowest amount for Inuit labour requirements, and I would request this remain at a minimum but if we are to increase it, I would not have a problem with 100 percent, although that would be my preference. However, I do not know what percentage this minimum labour requirement is, so I cannot speak to it now. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 466 – 6(2): Naujaat Community Hall

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Community and Government Services.

(interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, the community of Naujaat suffered a major loss last year when our community hall was destroyed by fire. The loss of this infrastructure has had a very negative impact on the community.

Earlier this year, I was proud to present a petition that was signed by almost 100 of my constituents. The petition called for a new community hall for Naujaat.

In his response to the petition, the minister indicated that the municipality needs to "place a claim with the insurer" as the hall was covered by the Nunavut Association of Municipalities Insurance Exchange.

Can the minister confirm if his department has been requested to assist the municipality in the insurance claim process? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had the privilege of visiting Naujaat just two short weeks ago and this was a topic of interest from my colleague from Aivilik as well as the mayor and council.

Mr. Speaker, to date we haven't received a request for support through the insurance claim process, but we are ready to engage. I've had conversations with the mayor and we're expecting that to go through at the earliest opportunity. We will continue to work

with the Hamlet of Naujaat and hopefully we can get this in order very soon. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank the minister for visiting our community. (interpretation ends) In his response to the petition that I presented on behalf of the community, the minister also indicated that "once the hamlet initiates the claim process, the Department of Community and Government Services will provide support to the municipal administration as they begin the process of replacing the community hall."

Can the minister confirm if a new community hall for Naujaat will be included in his department's five-year capital plan, or will the municipality be responsible for the tendering process? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I again thank the member for his questioning around this important municipal asset. Since it was a municipally owned asset and through the insurance that hamlets have, as far as I understand, it would be hamlet led, but we would be willing to support around this.

As far as I know, we have no plans to put a new community hall through the Government of Nunavut's capital planning process at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you minister for that response. That is not what I wanted to hear. (interpretation ends) Can the minister indicate what the approximate cost is for the design and construction of a new community hall for a municipality the size of Naujaat? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasie.

Hon. David Joanasie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am not going to share any figures around approximate cost for design or building. I do not have that information; I don't want to provide figures that might be relied upon at this time.

Again, our department is willing to support the municipality of Naujaat to submit to submit a claim through NAMIX. Hopefully through that we would see something that would be sizeable for the community. We're willing to support around this and we hope to get that support letter or email from the mayor or council as soon as we're ready. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 467 – 6(2): Activities of the Makigiaqta Inuit Training Corporation

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

As one of the two cabinet members who currently sit on the board of the Makigiaqta Training Corporation. Mr. Speaker, information published by Makigiaqta indicates that the corporation was established to provide funding and other support for training and initiatives that will provide Inuit with skills and qualifications for employment.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly support initiatives and programs that will enhance the ability of Inuit to gain the necessary skills and accreditation to fill positions in the public service. As the minister is aware, Makigiaqta's board of directors is responsible for approving funding proposals. I would like to ask: can the minister clearly describe the process by which she and her colleagues on the corporation's board of directors evaluate the funding proposals that are submitted. 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 your question. As you are aware, we are working with NTI and (interpretation ends) the Department of Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs (interpretation) to do the review of all the applications. We review the applications and work with NTI staff. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for that response. I would like to ask the minister if she can confirm if the Government of Nunavut is able to submit proposals for the consideration of the Board of Directors of the Makigiaqta Training Corporation, and provide details of whether proposals have been approved over the last 12 months, and/or rejected. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the member for the question. The applications are usually given to NTI, and NTI gives them to our department for review. Since I have taken this on, I have not seen any rejections, but I have seen different applications. The board met back in January and that is all I can respond with. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Government of Nunavut's most recent human resource strategy indicates, most of the government's occupations involve post-secondary education, and/or, experience. As recently as 2018, 55 percent of positions in

the GN required university degrees, and a further 24 percent required diplomas or trades qualifications.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that the Government of Nunavut requires medium, as well as long-term plans, to train Inuit to gain these essential skills and qualifications. Mr. Speaker, it is unclear whether the Government of Nunavut has been utilizing Makigiaqta training funds to meet these objectives. I understand and recognize that the Government of Nunavut does not directly fund the operations of the training corporation. However, I believe that it is important for the corporation to be accountable and transparent to the public.

I would like to ask if the minister will commit to working with the other members of the board of directors to ensure that the corporation reports annually on its expenditures and activities, and that this reporting includes detailed information on the outcomes and results of its funded programs. 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. This matter can be further reviewed and perhaps we can look at how best to bring it forward for these applications. However, I believe Human Resources already conducted a review on the improvements required as this is part of our concerted review process.

Further, with respect to GN staff, this falls under Inuit training needs and we did a comprehensive review outside of Makigiaqta, but through the specific Human Resources departmental review process. This is still under that review process on whether or not this can move forward, and to determine whether better training programs exist. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 468 – 6(2): Southern Hudson Bay Polar Bear Management

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

Mr. Speaker, as the minister is aware, Sanikiluaq's hunters and trappers organization is committed to the responsible and sustainable harvest of the Southern Hudson Bay polar bear population.

The harvest has important economic and cultural benefits for my community. As the minister will recall, I asked questions to her predecessor during our recent winter sitting concerning the issue of the Southern Hudson Bay polar bear population.

At that time, I raised concerns regarding the federal government's arbitrary decision to stop issuing export permits for hides.

Can the minister update the House today on the outcome of these discussions? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Environment, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank my colleague for asking for that update.

My federal counterpart came to our community and I am very pleased to say that we had discussions on this subject. After those discussions, the decision not to allow export permits was lifted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to say it properly in Inuktitut, but I will speak in English at this time, if that is okay.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, when I raised this issue during our winter sitting, I emphasized the importance of ensuring that Sanikiluaq Hunters and Trappers Organization is kept informed and involved about this situation.

Can the minister indicate what discussions she has had with the chairperson and members of the Sanikiluaq Hunters and Trappers Association regarding this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to thank my colleague asking that question. The Sanikiluaq Hunters and Trappers Organization was informed by way of correspondence on May 12, 2023. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I raised this issue during our winter sitting, the minister's predecessor stated that "the community has been phenomenal in doing their role as management, and it is not acceptable for them to be punished like this."

Mr. Speaker, I appreciated the minister's words and I was very glad that the government is willing to stand up for the hunters of Sanikiluaq.

Can the minister clarify what compensation will be available for Sanikiluaq's hunters in the event that the federal ban on issuing export permits is not lifted? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would also like to thank my colleague for his question.

The ban was very short. They can now export polar bear hides starting in May, and because of the short ban, and because of the lifting of the ban, we have not set up a compensation system since the ban has been lifted. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 469 – 6(2): Wolf Sampling and Collection Program

Mr. Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the people of Arviat, I wish you a “great day.”

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to question the Minister of Environment on the minister's statement from today; Improvements of the Wolf Sampling Collection Program.

Mr. Speaker, in the minister's statement, it states here that “...under the recently approved program, harvesters will get paid an increased amount of \$500.00 for samples submitted from harvested wolves across Nunavut. In some areas where caribou populations are in decline, such as Bluenose, Bathurst and Dolphin-Union herds, this payment will be \$900.00 for each sample.”

Mr. Speaker, are these the only caribou herds that are in decline in Nunavut? Thank you.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Environment, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for your request for more data, my fellow MLA. With respect to our caribou population and the fairly rapid decline, it will be more expensive to conduct the survey, but we are still proceeding with population surveys this year. Once the trend is clear either way, then if changes are required, there will be attempts to try to make it more efficient. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the 2018 Statutory Report on Wildlife to the Legislative Assembly, the report states that the Beverly caribou herd and the Qamanirjuaq caribou herd are in statistical decline. Now, if the increased amount was not

made for political reasons and it was made on statistics and on the counts of the caribou, will the minister commit to increasing the Wolf Sampling Program for the Beverly and Qamanirjuaq herds to \$900 before the fall? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also reiterate my thanks to our colleague for requesting more information in this regard. With the area he mentioned, there is a scheduled survey in June 2023 on the calving grounds of the herd, and once the data is reviewed and the trend direction identified and understood, we can make a better determination of their population status.

If they are in potential danger, then caribou management may require further changes, but currently we have left the status as it stands now with respect to the sampling fees for wolves. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once the calving grounds survey is completed for, I believe, the minister stated it was for this year for the Qamanirjuaq caribou herd, if there is a statistical decline, then will the minister commit to increasing the amount from \$500 to \$900 per wolf sample for the Qamanirjuaq caribou herd? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Environment, Ms. Quassa.

Hon. Joanna Quassa (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleague for his querying about these amounts. Within my announcement earlier, we identified that the amounts for this year are set at that current amount for this fiscal year only, however, if there is further indication of the caribou population declining, and based on their status, then we can review the amounts for the Wolf Sampling Program, if it needs to be raised higher, or if it should remain at the level today. Once the survey is completed, then the status will become clearer for all parties. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 470 – 6(2): Ethics Officer and Healthy Workplaces

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Human Resources.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Tununiq, I am proud to represent a number of constituents who work for the territorial government at decentralized offices in Pond Inlet.

Mr. Speaker, it is very important that our public servants have the ability to report potential cases of wrongdoing in the workplace.

Mr. Speaker, in November of last year, a new Ethics Officer for Nunavut was appointed under section 76 of the *Public Service Act*.

As the minister is aware, Ms. MacPherson was recently selected to be a judge of the Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories, and I congratulate her on this well-deserved honour.

Can the minister confirm whether the current deputy ethics officer will be appointed as the ethics officer or will the minister be undertaking a new selection process to fill the position? 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. Your observation is true, as it is regretful that this particular person will no longer work for us, and is moving to the Northwest Territories. Although that is a loss for us, nonetheless, we will start the process later in the summer as to our final determination. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Nutarak.

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. I also thank the minister for inviting us on Saturday morning, where members were included in that process, and whenever question arise, I appreciate your candour and hospitality in providing information as well as when we misunderstand any areas of your responsibilities.

(interpretation ends) As a former government employee, I speak from experience when I say that it is essential that our workplaces be healthy and free from bullying and harassment.

I understand and recognize that the Department of Human Resources has a Respectful and Harassment-Free Workplace Policy in place.

Can the minister indicate how her department ensures that Government of Nunavut employees in communities outside of Iqaluit are aware of their rights and obligations under this policy and are supported in the event that they choose to exercise their rights under the policy? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. Your assessment is truthful, and absolutely, when employees are not

treated properly, they have to take the initiative to speak up and to exercise their rights by submitting it to their supervisor. If the supervisor is not amenable to their complaints, they have the ability to move it further up the chain to speak about their issues or to inform the human resource manager.

If none exists in their office, then they can approach a different division such as the one in Igloolik, or here to the headquarters in Iqaluit. We need to ensure that in cases where protocols are not being followed, not all of our offices are informed. This is why we try to disseminate the information to our (interpretation ends) human resource officers (interpretation) and when they are properly trained and provide the information to employees of their rights and responsibilities, that is what is supposed to occur if an employee is not treated properly.

We must abide by the legislation and further, the (interpretation ends) Human Resources Manual (interpretation) that outlines how an employee can make a complaint should there be harassment in their office. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Nutarak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for explaining that clearly. (interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, many of our government's employees are in precarious situations, especially casual employees, who may fear that they will lose their jobs if they speak up about what they believe to be wrongdoing or inappropriate behaviour in the workplace.

Can the minister explain how Government of Nunavut managers are made aware of their responsibilities under the *Public Service Act* in respect to ensure that employees in such circumstances are not subject to reprisals? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Human Resources, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. (interpretation ends) It is very crucial that human resource officers within the departments know the policies in place, especially helping our employees, whether they're casuals or indeterminate, that they understand the right process to make reports if they need to, but also, it is very important that supervisors and directors are aware of what might be happening within the office that they feel it should go forward.

It is very important to ensure that all departments that, whether it be the human resource department, performance reviews are also very important when we know what the work ethics may be on an employee or if they feel they are not getting the right treatment, then they should continue forwarding their concerns to the directors or higher up, especially with the human resource officers within the department. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 471 – 6(2): Problems with Adoption Process

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question to the Minister of Family Services.

Mr. Speaker, the most recent report of the director of child and family services for 2020-21 was tabled in June 2022. That document noted a total of 127 adoptions for the period, including 109 custom adoptions, which is 86 percent of all adoptions.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister clearly describe how her department works with the custom adoptions commissioners to legally register custom adoptions and explain why it takes so long for this process to be finalized? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking that question. As you just stated, different forms of adoptions exist in the process, some handled by the Department of Family Services, while here in Nunavut for fiscal year 2022-23, there were (interpretation ends)131 custom adoptions (interpretation) processed within all of Nunavut.

Further, for fiscal year 2023-24, there have been 11 custom adoptions being processed within Nunavut. Now, I don't recall the other part of your question, nonetheless, part of the delays that can occur are when other parties separate from the Department of Family Services is included, such as Department of Justice along with cases initiated by legal services, as there are different areas where several parties can be included in this process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. Now I am using this scenario as my foundation and the basis of my queries. In our local communities, when Inuit undertake custom adoptions, such as adopting their grandchildren or their nephew or nieces, and that is where I am coming from. The adoption papers still have to be signed by the Commissioner of Nunavut, which is a legal requirement.

Mr. Speaker, although custom adoption commissioners have been appointed for most communities, it seems that there are some communities where individuals have not been appointed to fill this role.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister provide an update on which communities do not currently have custom adoptions commissioners and how her department ensures that all custom adoptions are legally registered so that families can receive the necessary benefits to support their children as soon as possible? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for asking those questions. The matters you reference, such as the 23 custom adoption commissioners here in Nunavut, are not under the Department of Family Services.

There are other adoptions we handle such as (interpretation ends) departmental adoption, private adoption and inter-country. (interpretation) Under custom adoptions, it can involve our department; however, the paperwork is not included in the paperwork required for Family Services.

I wanted to clarify that aspect, however, these are largely administered under Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, where they handle the paperwork under (interpretation ends) the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act*, (interpretation) and they must adhere to the requirements listed in this Act.

There are multiple sets of adoptions, and the mandate for the appointment of the custom adoption commissioners do not fall under the Department of Family Services. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This fact that they are not under the Department of Family Services is correct, however, it touches upon the mandate overall of the department as it affects a family's income support branches, and without the proper paperwork outlining the custom adoption, they are impacted in the expenses of supporting an addition to their families, and without this paperwork, their adoption becomes moot if it does not indicate the family is responsible for their adopted child.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the government's adoption process does not seem to be operating smoothly. The delays in processing paperwork are causing hardship for adoptive families and their children. The most recent business plan of the Department of Family Services states that one of the department's priorities for 2023-24 is to "Begin the process to review and make suggested changes to *Adoptions Act* and formalize Inuit custom adoption practices in legislation."

Can the minister describe what progress has been made on this initiative to date and indicate whether the current delays in processing applications can be addressed before waiting for the results of this review? *Qujannamiik*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Family Services, Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for requesting further clarification on that matter.

Now, with respect to our departmental capacity, the workers handling these issues are short-handed, and due to this lack of capacity, it affects this. Nonetheless, what you have

identified is something we are looking to improve upon, and how best to enact changes to ensure a smoother operational process.

With regards to the areas that we can improve, we have conducted research into the details to have a more efficient process as there are indeed bottlenecks causing this slow pace of moving this forward, and further, another aspect that becomes problematic and which I mentioned earlier, is related to cases where multiple parties are involved in the adoption process.

This requirement to involve other departments or agencies, if they too can look to speed up their review processes, it would enable us to speed up the entire process. Nonetheless, this multiple party approval process slows things down. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 472 – 6(2): Kugluktuk Power Plant

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to address my question to the Minister responsible for Qulliq Energy Corporation. It concerns the replacement of Kugluktuk's power plant. This is a very important issue for my community, which is why I'm raising it again.

(interpretation ends) As the minister is aware, the Qulliq Energy Corporation's most recent tender to construct Kugluktuk's new airport closed on Thursday, last week. Can the minister tell me today how many bids have been submitted to construct Kugluktuk's new power plant? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank my colleague for asking further questions about that.

I can't say right now because the RFP just closed. Once I have the information, I will be able to relay the information to my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) As the minister is aware, the Qulliq Energy Corporation's most recent request for tender to construct Kugluktuk's new power plant was issued on April 04, 2023. At that time the minimum Inuit labour content for the project was set at 45 percent of total labour costs.

However, on May 19, 2023, the Qulliq Energy Corporation subsequently reduced the minimum Inuit labour requirement to 30 percent of total labour costs. Can the minister clearly explain the reasons why the Qulliq Energy Corporation reduced the minimum

Inuit labour requirement by such a significant amount? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank my colleague for the question.

We always have to look to see how many Inuit are available in Nunavut to be hired for these projects, but I agree that it really benefits communities when we are able to create jobs in the communities, especially. When the community is being looked at to see how many Inuit would be available, we base the estimates on that, but the RFP just closed. As to how many Inuit will be able to work; we will be working further on that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Anavilok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank you for that response.

(interpretation ends) When I raised the issue of Kugluktuk's new power plant during last Friday's sitting in the Legislative Assembly, I noted that the Qulliq Energy Corporation is no longer taking a hybrid solar-diesel design for the plant. Some federal funding for the construction of the new power plant had been approved through the Arctic Energy Fund.

In response to my questions last Friday, the Minister responsible for Qulliq Energy Corporation indicated that some of the funding had to be returned to the federal government. Can the minister confirm the exact amount of funding that has been returned? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Mr. Pauloosie Akeeagok.

Hon. P.J. Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you for asking those questions.

This issue, as I outlined previously was due to needing to enact changes, specifically future construction of the power plant for Kugluktuk, and I reiterate my appreciation for his warm hospitality to his community. I was able to see the actual new lot where the power plant will be built, prepared by the community as the chosen location.

This aspect, as I explained previously, is related to the solar panels that collect the sun's rays to recharge certain power cells, and the large fuel tank. They were what caused the problems with the original plan, and together they surpassed the allotted funding amount during the final review totalling over \$8.5 million, and this was the additional costs that went over our allocation. We had to request more funding, so I cannot identify how much

will need to be returned as I do not have that information. I will return with the right information to my colleague. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 473 – 6(2): Subsea Fibre Project

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to direct my question today to the Minister responsible for Community and Government Services.

Mr. Speaker, it has been a few months since, as MLAs, we have received an update on the subsea fibre project for here in Iqaluit. I wonder if the minister would be able to give us an update on the progress and status of that project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Hon. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Fibre was bound to come up again at some point.

Mr. Speaker, the Iqaluit fibre project that was tendered out through the best and final offer, we didn't have a successful bidder and, as a result, we had to cancel. At this time, we are seeking alternative funding sources to try to gain the level of funding that is required to proceed with this project. It's still an ongoing endeavour, but we've had to take a pause on it through the tendering process that was put out. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Your first supplementary, Mr. Hickes.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad the minister brought up the cancelled RFP. Mr. Speaker, when I look on Nunavut Tenders, I can find seven related tenders that have been put out in the last number of years, of which three have now been cancelled, one awarded for a project, director of services on installation, which I think is putting the cart far before the horse. We're looking at installing and we don't even have a project going forward. A standing offer was accepted for providing cabling material, a standing offer, again, not necessary until the project moves forward. Two other RFPs, for some reason, the system won't let me go in and check the status of, as well as a number of people I've had to look into this.

When I look at all these RFPs that are being cancelled, I have a serious question when we look at some of the correspondence we have received as a committee and as MLAs, even from the Nunavut Association of Municipalities resolution stating right in it that the Government of Nunavut would have been better to have spent this money on other infrastructure priorities, such as water, wastewater, granular supply, building housing, supporting Nunavut 3000. At the very end of that resolution, the Nunavut Association of Municipalities requests that the Government of Nunavut support an Inuit business that seeks to leverage public and private funds to improve basic services into Nunavut, and

then reallocate the funds currently targeted for the Government of Nunavut fibre optic project to other priority community and municipal infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to get information from the minister today of what and the minister has committed in this House previously that he would be willing to work with the Inuit organizations and the Inuit-led initiatives, and I would like to get confirmation. The minister stated that they're looking for more funding and they're not looking at other options. What is the Government of Nunavut looking at to proceed on this project? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the areas that we're looking into is seeking other federal funding pots that might fit the project eligibility, but also alongside it, we are trying to look at other options around if other entities out there are looking to do a similar project as what we have been pursuing. This project has been ongoing for several years and the intention was to always trying to have everything lined up for when the cable is ready to plug in. Those RFP processes that we had put out were all to do with that.

Mr. Speaker, I am still committed to working with my colleagues here on how best to spend our capital funds and fibre has been on our priority for a number of years. We will continue to push forward and look at how we can get that and of course, the satellite costs that we continue to incur on a year-to-year basis, considering those in contrast to having a fibre link just to Iqaluit alone would pay dividends, I think, on both ends. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Hickee: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The minister won't get any argument, I don't think, from anyone from our side of the Chamber that bringing fibre into Iqaluit will speed up and improve the bandwidth quality across the entire territory. There is no secret to that.

Mr. Speaker, it has been publicly stated that Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the Qikiqtani Inuit Association, PanArctic Communications, chambers of commerce, Baffin and Iqaluit, as I stated, the Nunavut Association of Municipalities, the City of Iqaluit, and Inuit businesses support looking at other alternatives to utilize these funds that have been allocated to this project in a way that would alleviate the government burden on financing this project and be able to use these infrastructure dollars for other needed priorities.

Can the minister commit to me today that the minister is still open to working with these organizations to look at other options and providing fibre optic to Iqaluit? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. All I'll say is all options are on the table at this time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Mr. Malliki.

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

Speaker: The member is seeking unanimous consent to extend question period. Are there any nays? There is a nay. Item 7. Written Questions. Item 8. Returns to Written Questions. Item 9. Replies to Opening Address. Item 10. Petitions. Item 11. Responses to Petitions. Item 12. Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Minister of Community and Government Services, Mr. Joanasié.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

Tabled Document 137 – 6(2): Government of Nunavut Drinking Water Strategic Framework

Hon. David Joanasié: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table the Government of Nunavut's Drinking Water Strategic Framework. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Tabled Document 138 – 6(2): Unlawful Property Forfeiture Act 2021-22 Annual Report

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to table the *Unlawful Property Forfeiture Act 2021-22 Annual Report*. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. Minister of Education, Ms. Gross.

Tabled Document 139 – 6(2): Provincial and Territorial Ministers of Education Meeting – July 5, 2022

Tabled Document 140 – 6(2): Student Loan Fund March 31, 2021

Tabled Document 141 – 6(2): Student Loan Fund March 31, 2022

Hon. Pamela Gross: *Quana*, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table three reports, the provincial-territorial Ministers of Education met on July 5, 2022 for the 110th meeting of the Council of Ministers of Education Canada; and also, the Department of Education's Student Loan Fund for the year ending March 31, 2021 and March 31, 2022. *Quana*, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Board, Mr. Kusugak.

Tabled Document 142 – 6(2): Cannabis Licensing 2022-23 Annual Report

Tabled Document 143 – 6(2): Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Board 2021-22 Annual Report

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased to table two reports, the Cannabis Licensing 2022-23 Annual Report and the Nunavut Liquor and Cannabis Board 2021-22 Annual Report. No, I don't have any samples, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

>>*Laughter*

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. Minister of Health, Mr. Main.

Tabled Document 144 – 6(2): Inuusivut Anninaqtuq Action Plan 2017-2022

Hon. John Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I am pleased to table the 2017-2022 Inuusivut Anninaqtuq Action Plan Final Report. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: Tabling of Documents. Item 13. Tabling of Documents. Item 14. 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. Bills 24 and 25 with Mr. Hickes in the Chair.

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

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 15:40 and Committee resumed at 16:08*

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

Chairman (Mr. Hickes): Thank you. I would like to call the committee meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole, we have the following items to deal with: Bills 24 and 25. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We wish to commence the review of Bill 24 and the accompanying documents and, if time permits, we will proceed to Bill 25 and the accompanying documents. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 24?

Some Members: Agreed.

**Bill 24 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 1,
2023-2024 – Consideration in Committee**

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

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

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

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please escort the witnesses in.

Thank you. For the record, please introduce your officials, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To my left is Megan Hunt, Deputy Minister of Health, and to my right is Jeff Chown, Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr. Chairman, and throughout the course of this session, I may need to do some substitutions, but we will deal with it with your permission as we move along, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Kusugak. I am expecting that we will have a few witness changes over the course of the afternoon, but if you can please proceed with your opening comments for Bill 24.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appear before you today to present Bill 24, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, 2023-24, No. 1*.

Through this bill, the government is seeking to increase its overall appropriation by \$14,116,000 for two departments, that being Health and Community and Government Services.

If approved, the Department of Health will increase an additional \$9.92 million to fund two key areas, namely, addressing shortages and improving dental services. The department of Health has put together a plan to address staff shortages in our health centres to keep the doors open and provide life-saving services to Nunavummiut. The plan includes a range of recruitment and retention incentives, along with several non-monetary initiatives to improve working conditions. Health intends to implement these measures on a two-year trial basis and will require \$9.3 million to implement in 2023-24.

Health also plans to reorganize and revamp its territorial dental services at a cost to the GN of \$580,000 in 2023-24. This additional appropriation will allow Health to create a

new Dental Division, funded partially by the GN and partially through the agreements with the Government of Canada.

The Department of Community and Government Services is seeking \$4.2 million in additional appropriations to move forward with rebuilding the Qulliq Energy Corporation's IT infrastructure after their January 2023 cyber-attack. As you know, the cyber-attack crippled the corporation's business network and shut down their access to critical applications. CGS and QEC staff are working to fully restore and modernize the corporation's IT infrastructure. This work needs to happen and this appropriation, if approved, will allow the cost to be absorbed by the Government of Nunavut. If this funding is not approved, the cost will need to be recouped from Nunavut ratepayers in the form of higher electricity costs.

Mr. Chairman, although we are seeking this O&M supplementary funding early in the fiscal year, I am confident that departments are making good effort to deliver programs with their appropriated budgets. This concludes my opening comments, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. If members can go to Bill 24, you're looking to approve Not Previously Authorized, \$14,116,000. I'll ask any members for any general comments to the opening comments at this time. Seeing none, please turn to page 4. We will see under Directorate, Not Previously Authorized, \$580,000. Any questions? I'll give members just a moment to get to that page. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the Department of Health's operations and maintenance, will dental patients be seen within Nunavut or outside the territory? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to the funding required for dental services, dental officers work in Nunavut and outside of Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are long delays in getting dental services delivered in some communities. Will there be an increase in the frequency of visits for dental services if we approve this appropriation? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

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

Chairman: Thank you. Deputy Minister Hunt, please.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you and thank you for the question. We currently have 30 dental clinics across the territory that are fully equipped with dental suites and visiting dental teams have full access to these. By doing the dental reorg, it will give us the ability to expand and further meet the needs within each of these community centres because we know that they're not fully being utilized at this time because of some of those disparities. This is really meant to help fill that gap, improve the services, have it timelier and closer to home. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. I don't have any more names on my list for this item. I would like to maybe just get some clarification. There are currently two existing positions within this team that are Vote 4 funded. Was the opportunity explored to look at using further Vote 4, which is federal, or partner dollars, non-GN dollars to support these positions? Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have the deputy of health respond to that through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Hunt, go ahead, please.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you for the question and apologies. To your question around the two non-Vote 4 positions which are currently contract positions because they are physicians and then funding that would further allow us to use non-GN dollars, it is part of the work and discussions and negotiations with our Indigenous Services counterparts as part of our Non-Insured Health Benefits and medical transportation discussions. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Maybe I'm missing something here. With these two positions that are being applied for to remove from contract positions and put them under Vote 2 funding, if the department is successful in lobbying to get these positions paid through for Vote 4, would these monies be put back into surplus? Thank you. Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you and thank you for the further clarification. Ultimately the goal would be for reinvestments into health services and, of course, the ability to bring that forward for support and approval would be the goal of Health. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. I still have no more names on my list under this item, under Directorate. Previously Not Approved. \$580,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please, on the same page, on page 4, looking at Local Health Care Service Delivery. Previously Not Approved. \$9,336,000. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My first question would be that the department is asking for a sup bill of \$9.3 million only two months into the new fiscal year. I just need clarification from either the minister or one of the officials on why this is happening. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is something that was mauled over for quite some time. This is new money that the department is asking for funding on. If we wait and do budget from within and go until later in the year and ask for a supplementary appropriation for this amount, you would get kind of criticized for not doing it at the front end. In this case, the department thought it was important enough that this is something that we need to do at the front end of this year.

Unfortunately it did not make the time enough to put it into our budget, but I believe that the department was being proactive in saying that we need this funding. It's very critical that we do this and decided to put it in the front end. We realize that it's just two months into the budget to this year, but it's one of those where you're damned if you do or if you wait longer, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under the recruitment and retention bonus system, there is a little over \$4 million budgeted for group 5 employees.

I have both heard and seen that there is quite a discrepancy between the permanent, indeterminate nurses' benefits and what an agency nurse or a casual nurse might get in terms of trips paid back and forth. There was the program about bringing a buddy. I know that was initiated to try to keep health workers here, but they will fly one of their buddies up for Christmas or other occasions. This is just making it harder to recruit indeterminate nurses when the benefits financially are leaning towards agency nurses.

Is there anything going to be done for the indeterminate or permanent nurses that live here in Nunavut, that want to live in Nunavut, that service Nunavummiut, that don't just come and go as they please when they feel like coming here and to where they want to go? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. Just to add a little bit more clarity, if maybe the group 5 employees, a description of those professions could be described as well too. I'm assuming, Minister Kusugak, you're going to ask me to go to Ms. Hunt, so I'll follow that and I'll go directly to Ms. Hunt. Thank you.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you. Thank you for your question. I'll start with an overview of the group 5 roles because I think it's helpful that it identifies more than just our nursing complement. In the group 5, mental health consultants, regional communicable disease coordinators, dental therapists, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, registered dietitians, audiologists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists, biomedical technologists, central sterilization, medical laboratory techs, mammography technicians, tomography technicians, radiation technologists, medical stenographers, registered respiratory therapists, group 5 nurses who are not currently receiving the

recruitment and retention bonus under MOU 8 because they have completed their bonus system due to their years of service.

Chairman: Thank you. If you could acknowledge the Chair when you're done and if you could please answer the member's question on what incentives are there for indeterminate nurses to not go to a casual status or agency. Ms. Hunt.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: If I can, Mr. Chairman, the bonus package on the recruitment and retention issue is this bonus is with a two-year return of service requirement for existing and new hires for indeterminate and job-sharing health care professionals designated as group 5 employees who were not eligible for other recruitment and retention bonuses in the last year under the MOU 8 of the current collective agreement. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: If I may, Mr. Savikataaq, if I understand that correctly, any indeterminate nurses, long-time indeterminate nurses that have been practising in the territory of Nunavut would not be eligible for any of these bonuses as they already do get a pittance amount every month for retention. Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For current nurses, they receive an hourly wage increase, and in some cases and in the critically hard-to-recruit communities, it is roughly \$15 an hour that they receive. There are benefits that are currently in place for existing indeterminate nurses at the community level. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the official for naming off all the different jobs that are going to be qualified for this retention bonus, but in the outlying communities, it's nurses that determine whether a health centre is open or not. I mean, we get all those other professions brought in, but the health centre will not close generally if there are nurses there to see patients.

What the official just said, it seems like we're setting up even more of a two-tier system still. The nurses that have been around a long time should be given recognition that they are working hard and they are staying up here, and a trend that's happening and I know part of it to do with keeping the health centres open is relying on agency nurses, but Health has to do whatever it can to get off the reliance of agency nurses.

The official would know more than anyone on this side here, but I don't think, in the provinces, that the majority of their nurses are out of agencies. I could be wrong, but I would think that, for example, in Manitoba most of the nurses live and work where they are from.

Anyway, getting away from that, on the loan forgiveness program of \$35,000, which is part of the retention service too, what percentage would that be from the compensation

and benefits budget? Is it .00001, or is it one percent? What is it roughly; just to show how serious they are about the loan forgiveness program? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The loan forgiveness is for loan forgiveness, I believe, of Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students. In terms of how many percent of this overall budget it is, I'd have to do some quick math, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Maybe it would help a little bit in the line of questioning if the minister could explain. In the briefing information we have "to repay eligible debts to Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students." Maybe a description of what those eligible debts are may help the proceeding. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe it is a loan forgiveness program of \$5,000 per eligible student in the program on their student loans, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think this might be my last question, but it's about recruitment. Through Arctic College the Nunavut government runs a nursing program; a four-year degree program. Once they have graduated, they go into a one-year mentorship, and then they hopefully will get employment.

I know that they have a hard time getting employment in Nunavut because, I don't know about today, but as of last year and the year before, the requirement for most nursing jobs was three years' experience. So if they'd had only years' experience, they were screened out of the interview process.

I know of one class, I believe there were six or seven that graduated, all but one got jobs down south. It's good for the other provinces that we're training nurses in Nunavut, spending our Nunavut dollars on them and they leave, but that's not the intent of the program. If I can get some insight; is anything going to be changed so we can get locally or Nunavut resident nurses to work within Nunavut? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I believe that the Department of Health has taken strides in dealing with that very specific issue. We have a one-year internship program and they have begun to see how they can turn that one-year internship program as experience leading to two years' experience or equivalent so that the nurses that do train in Nunavut could stay and work in Nunavut. If you could allow, Mr. Chairman, for Ms. Hunt to elaborate further on that, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Please do, Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Exactly as our minister alluded to, that we have worked quite strongly through our Operations department with the Nunavut Arctic College to have a mentorship program that was one year, that now can be up to two years so that nurses who may need further support, mentorship, and skills to be successful, will then have their three years of experience being able to reduce that so they are eligible for the positions here in Nunavut. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm glad to hear that they're working on it, but it should have been done yesterday, as we need nurses and we're always hearing that they're short staff nurses in the communities. They have some health centres that are completely shut down for periods of time because they have no nurses or they're seeing emergencies only. It's just a comment that let's get it done and let's get it done now. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Savikataaq. If I may add to that, it has often been said that our nurse graduates, once they graduate and write their national exam, they have a mentorship obligation here in Nunavut, yet they can go to another jurisdiction and start working immediately. I know that Mr. Savikataaq just made a comment and I kind of supplemented it a little bit, but what is the department doing to keep our nurse graduates that we expend and subsidize quite heavily through our Nunavut Arctic College program and the Department of Health spends quite a bit of money through Nunavut Arctic College? What are we doing to keep these graduates here in the territory? Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It wasn't that long ago that I had the privilege of being the Minister responsible for Health, and we've had discussions around retaining nurses that are graduating from our schools, from our nursing program here in Nunavut. One of the things that often came up is the need to have training and experience prior to working in health centres.

Unlike the south, we don't have the privilege of having more than one or two nurses in the community and it would be very dangerous, I think, to put in an untrained nurse, although they just finished school, to be released into a community and deal with an emergency situation. You could see the difference between working in a health centre and pick a community in Nunavut or in Winnipeg and those places where they have more support and more mentorship. When they're on a shift, there are at least a dozen other nurses with them.

That's one of the issues that was discussed around, back in my time anyway, about dealing and trying to retain as many nurses that are training and working in Nunavut. We have the best trained nursing staff, I believe, through our training program and nursing program here through our college.

To elaborate more on details and particularly to retain the new nurses that we are training in Nunavut, if you could have the deputy respond further, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. Just to build off our minister's response, I would just add that in our communities and Nunavut being very different than anywhere else in Canada, our nurses are really the backbone of health care and they are in many situations that are very critical in nature. That can be very different than what our urban communities have at their fingertips to support nurses like diagnostics, imaging, specialists, and subspecialties. Making sure that that level of mentorship so that they are prepared for some of the most critical situations and maintaining patients while we organize for them to be medevaced out for higher levels of care is definitely a priority for us.

Part of our work when we did the roadmap for strengthening the Nunavut nursing workforce and engaging deeply with nurses about what they wanted to see and what would strengthen nursing from a retention and recruitment perspective, they shared wisely with us about doing critical workforce planning and evaluation as part of our four pillars, focusing deeply on recruitment, professional development, and training, as well as increasing leadership opportunities.

That has really been the driver of Health listening to our current nurse workforce here to really strengthen and look at putting in mechanisms that are key priorities to maintaining them but also key priorities in recruiting others to come and lift with them, closer to home and being here more permanently. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I don't have any other first names on my list, so I'll go back to Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regard to the employees who are the nurses and the bonuses that are awarded to the nurses, it seems like the bonuses are set up for the agency nurses and not the permanent nurses that are working in the communities in Nunavut. It doesn't seem fair when we apply bonuses to agency nurses and not the indeterminate employees. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As I indicated earlier, and as Ms. Hunt indicated, it is (interpretation ends) the bonus with a two-year return of service requirement for existing and new hires for indeterminate and job share health care professionals. (interpretation) It does apply to both the agency and also the indeterminate employees. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In hearing that about contracted positions, along with the existing nursing personnel at the community who remain in the community, how equitable have you attempted to make these amounts paid to the two categories in salary? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Maybe if I could have Ms. Hunt deal with those details through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Please proceed, Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. So for indeterminate staff and for those coming in on CSA or through other avenues, we have made sure that this is done in a way that doesn't have these bonuses front-end loaded, so that the return of service really expands at a longer term.

So the smaller amount for those bonuses is paid at the beginning for the employee and the larger amount is paid at the end of their return for service, as a way to have employees stay longer because the benefit of the higher amount of that retention bonus is paid towards the end of their time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason why I'm asking this question is that I flew with the nurses and one of them was a contract nurse and the other was an indeterminate nurse. The indeterminate nurse was really envious of the contract nurse and I overheard them talking on the plane. It sounds like this bonus situation is putting us into peril because it doesn't seem like everybody get's the same fair treatment. That's all I wanted to say. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Just with the same line of questioning with Ms. Hunt, I think to get some clarity, so if we have a 15-year indeterminate nurse that's been working in QGH or some nursing capacity in the territory, Ms. Hunt, you had mentioned earlier that there is a wage subsidy bonus system in some of the communities, but if I look at Qikiqtani General Hospital here, or the public health office, what would be the difference or the similarity between this bonus structure, from a 15-year indeterminate nurse, to a casual nurse that commits to coming up for two years? Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There are different tiers of bonuses for nurses in different roles. So at the community level, and then of course at the most critically hard to staff, at health centres the bonus is a little bit higher, but there are tiered bonuses across the majority of our different nursing positions, whether you be in Iqaluit or another region or community within the territory. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I do understand that. I'm still a little confused that if you have nurse A with 15 years indeterminate, and nurse B who just signed a CSA, but is committed to being up here regularly over the course of two years, would those scales be the same, or would the indeterminate nurse be excluded because they already receive the \$375 a month, I believe it is, through the nurses' agreement that they receive monthly for retention? Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. To your question, for long-term indeterminate nurses or those who are new; so there have been different bonus structures over a number of years that nurses have had the ability to receive. So, these new bonuses would be for new nurses in indeterminate positions, for nurses who may move to other locations within the territory, especially for those critically hard to staff areas who would also be able to apply for that.

In some circumstances there is eligibility for the loan forgiveness program if they are returning to service from somewhere else. There are different retention and recruitment bonuses at different stages over the last number of years, including the \$10,000 retention bonus that was part of our time during COVID. These are new ones and so they are focused on our new-to-recruit nurses. Or, I would not say "just nurses," but all of the positions that I identified earlier in my statement, but that would not exclude nurses from moving to other positions throughout the territory where there are other bonus structures for their hours of service in those critical-to-staff health centres. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I hope I'm not coming across as antagonistic here, because that is definitely not my intention. I am still trying to get some clarity on: if we have got a 15-year indeterminate nurse, they would have accessed their recruitment bonus system, which would have capped out at the three-year point, which would have been 12 years ago, and wouldn't have received any bonuses since, unless they were a part of that \$10,000 front-line staff.

So if you have got a public health nurse that was not involved in the COVID situation as a part of their day-to-day duties, they would not have been eligible for that bonus. So these nurses would not have received any type of a retention bonus other than the amount negotiated through the nursing agreement in the last 12 years.

So to me, the deputy minister, Ms. Hunt, you are saying that they are different, but the same in some respects, and I cannot wrap head around what are we doing to keep our indeterminate nurses somewhat satisfied? They are the first to get rejected for holiday leave. There are all kinds of community commitments and engagement in the community that they have. I think it is critical that we recognize, to Mr. Savikataaq's point, that we recognize our long-term outstanding nurses. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have a quick substitution, through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Swap away. Thank you. Just for the record, Minister Kusugak, can you introduce your new witness, although she is no stranger to the House. Thank you.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, colleagues, for your patience. To my right is Jennifer Berry, Assistant Deputy Minister of Operations for Health. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Please proceed, Ms. Berry.

Ms. Berry: Thank you for the question. We do look to our full-time nurses. We do value the work that they do and the commitment that they have made to the Department of Health and to serving Nunavummiut long term.

There are a few things that we have to support the current full-time nurses; one is looking at the nursing roadmap. As previously mentioned, we had a lot of engagement with our frontline nurses to better understand what they need to say in their roles. This was outside of just monetary incentives because, before the pandemic, before the global nursing shortage, we had the best compensation package in Canada. We would recruit nurses, but we had challenges in retaining them. That was the focus of the roadmap work was to really understand why they weren't staying for a long term. We're working on improving the work environment for the nurses and, by doing that, we will have longevity.

In terms of the critical workforce packages, to answer the question that was asked around the bonuses, so the recruitment and retention bonus that's in package 2 is for all group 5, which also includes our nurses who have been working with us longer than three years because those nurses already receive the \$20,000 or \$25,000 that's paid over the course of 30 months. Up to this point, we haven't been able to offer them anything further for recruitment and retention bonuses. Those nurses who have completed the 30 months will be eligible for this recruitment and retention bonus. That's a step forward for us for supporting the frontline nurses.

We are also looking at flexible employment, which is important when we look at shortened job shares or alternate job share rotations, because we have full-time nurses; we have a lot. If we think of the recent nursing association nursing survey, we have a large number of nurses that are already at retirement age or actually beyond retirement age. Currently, without these packages being approved, we had no other option but either work full time or casual. By creating an opportunity for flexible job share opportunities, we're going to be able to retain our full-time nurses that are nearing the end of their careers to stay in our workforce longer because they will be able to pick up maybe a 60 percent line versus the 100 percent line that we can only offer right now.

These are just examples of some of the ways we're trying to support the nurses we have in our system right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Berry. That's the point I was trying to get at was our long-time indeterminate nurses will qualify for this as well too, over and above anything that they're currently getting. Next name I have on my list: Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have been here all day; this is the first time I'm speaking.

I would just like to welcome you all for coming to answer these really important questions. I have a number and what I would like to start with is I did try to write down and listen to everybody who was included in that group 5 number of employees who will now qualify for this bonus, and I did hear regional communicable disease coordinators and I am curious about whether or not... .

Those of us who have followed this issue over the years know that a number of years ago, when there was a nursing bonus introduced, it excluded a number of territorial employees who were not frontline workers, however, who, as part of the job qualifications, had to have a nursing degree as well as frontline work experience. Those included communicable disease coordinators as well as the territorial... . I am forgetting what that title was, public health nursing coordinator I believe it was. I'm wondering if those territorial- and regional-level nurses who are not working front-line are all included in this bonus. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Ms. Berry respond, through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Please proceed, Ms. Berry.

Ms. Berry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There was a recent change last year, not last year, well I guess last year, for the public health nurse consultant position you're referring to, to be eligible for the bonuses because they have a job requirement of also filling in front-line work as required. We didn't extend this out to territorial positions that did not have a specific front-line delegation in their job description at this time. It was really to look at our critical workforce on the front line. That was our focus for this. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for that response. I'm not sure if there is still a territorial tuberculosis coordinator, but one would hope that anybody who could impact the health of our people, especially in a critical emergency like a pandemic who might be called down, would be able to access this bonus.

Mr. Chairman, I am wondering also about if we could just get the team to elaborate on the non-monetary initiatives that are included in this plan, and what does that mean, and who are the stakeholders? Earlier there was mention of providing a better workplace, however that doesn't really tell me what the steps are going to be to create those better workplaces. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Before I have Ms. Berry respond, it's important I think for all of us to realize that this is a starting point. What the Department of Health is presenting before this House today is a place where we can begin to deal with compensation and retention, most importantly, of our health care professionals. I'm hopeful that the Department of Health will build on this and continue to find creative ways to retain our nursing workforce. If I could, through you, have Ms. Berry respond further, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Berry.

Ms. Berry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Some of the ways that we're trying to improve the workplace is through training and support. It wasn't that long ago where we didn't offer a standardized orientation for nurses coming into territory. Now we have a robust orientation and we continue to enhance the orientation, the onboarding, we have found ways to offer the training in a hybrid model, so people can start the training before they even come into territory.

We have expanded the onboarding and training programs beyond just our community health nurses. Public health nurses, the nurses at the hospital, mental health nurses, now all have orientation manuals and orientation programs. When you don't have those things in place, we're not setting people up to be successful when they join our workforce.

It is very frightening for nurses when they come into health centres to work for the first time because there is more responsibility than what they're used to working in a hospital. We really are trying to focus on how we support people from the time they apply to a job to the time they come into the territory and into our facilities.

We're also spending a lot of time talking to staff around wellness. How can we improve wellness? If you're in a small nursing station and it's a two-nurse station, it means you're on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. How do you expect your nurses to stay long term and how do you expect them to stay well if that is the responsibility? They don't get to go out camping and they can't go out fishing because they have to be close by to respond to anything in the community.

Looking at changing the hours of operation is one of those ways we can create space for nurses to have dedicated time off by having an evening shift, for example. Also on the sealift, we purchased exercise equipment for staff at the health centres. We have learned that in our new health centres that have a fitness centre, we have nurses that are choosing to go to those communities because there is a place for them to release, to relax, to be well, so we're introducing those.

We have already started plans for... Well, we have already engaged in training for our managers, so our nurse in charge, our directors and executive directors. The stronger our managers are, the more supports will be to the staff in the health centres and create a

more welcoming and collaborative environment. As many members know, we have a security contract, which then we see reduced violence against our staff when we have the security contracts in place. We offer training on de-escalating difficult situations.

Again, we're really listening to what the nurses have been telling us over the years of why it's so challenging, what makes them want to leave full-time work, and just overall, really focusing on the wellness of our staff. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would argue that our starting point was on April 1, 1999. As somebody who worked really hard to advocate for our nurses in my career, I'm really happy to hear that community safety is part of the path forward. I know that prevention through establishing security teams is really important.

However, I think it's also extremely important to focus on public education. We all know that over the years, we have had to put out public appeals for the public to be kinder to our nursing staff in particular. I think that if we want to retain nurses, we have to make sure that they ultimately are safe in the community, not just in the workplace but when they're out in the community because we know that it's not always just in the workplace that they're facing problems from people who are upset.

I'll just move on a little bit to the concerns that I have about whether or not the Nunavut Employees Union has been a part of this planning or where are the steps that are going to be taken, as well as the Registered Nurses Association of the NWT and Nunavut, and particularly because we want to make sure that those who aren't receiving the bonuses are being fairly treated as well and those advocacy organizations are there to ensure that for them.

Further to that, that \$9.3 million, the plan is to implement over a two-year trial basis, and establishing a baseline bonus system... . You're coming to us, asking us to help you do that, however, what we know is that once that bonus system is established, especially when it comes to unionized workers, that it is very difficult to take it away. So in fact, this ask could roll over into a number of years and become a part of the overall cost of operations.

Mr. Chairman, if we could have some information on that, I would really appreciate it. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Deputy Minister Hunt respond those, through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Hunt.

Ms. Hunt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the question. Just in response to the engagement and Health's role in working with the employees union and the Registered Nurses Association in the development and presentation for a critical workforce package 2, there has been a great deal of undertaking with both.

So our ADM of operations and team have spent time with the union to make sure that they have been presented with the information, had feedback to the critical workforce package 2, have identified their support for the critical workforce package 2, and we also recognize that collective bargaining will be upcoming, and so recognize the question around the impacts to ongoing budgets, but also the opportunity to really improve and increase the health workforce across Nunavut, and then a regular cycle with the nurses association to update to have cross communication to make sure that there are discussions, planning, raising concerns, and also identifying solutions.

So that has all really been captured into the critical workforce package 2 that has been received in your packages. Thank you for your question. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I have no more names on my list currently. Last call. Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is an ongoing issue in my constituent communities. The barrier and the gap; the lack of communication at the health centres. It is very important that each Nunavut resident gets the best health care possible.

When it comes to an individual that is only fluent in Inuktitut, there is a big barrier and gap. As an MLA for my constituent communities, I have spoken to quite a few of my constituents and there is a barrier and gap between the patient and the nurse on-call. It's disturbing, and it's probably not only happening in my community, and the barrier and the gap can be filled if we can have Inuit working at every health centre. I feel that the nurses need support, so I want to help my constituents. There were a pretty few close calls where a patient didn't get the care he needed and when he or she finally got the care, it saved a life. It's probably all over Nunavut. There is a big barrier and gap that needs to be filled.

Also, what I find disturbing is when we do train nurses and they go south to go work, and now I guess my big question is: does the Government of Nunavut get the money back for the nurses that they train that go south? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I will allow the last question because it does have something to do with recruitment and retention, but the first part is not really relevant to this proceeding, although it is an important matter. Minister Kusugak.

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

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Berry.

Ms. Berry: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We do not recoup the costs that the GN incurs for training nurses after they leave. That was the question, correct?

Chairman: Mr. Quqqiaq.

Mr. Quqqiaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sorry for not going by the budget here. What I would like to see is if we are going to train nurses, and like you say, they need two years' experience, and if they do go south, it would be nice to see them come back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I'll just take that as a comment. Next name I have on my list, Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My colleague, Ms. Brewster, to find out if Ms. Brewster's question was responded to, I am trying to get back to her question to see if there was a response in regard to bonuses to make sure that they stay and that we retain nurses in regard to the bonuses. Will this bonus process be used indeterminately? Will this be used? Every time we have main estimates, will this line item be included each year?

We do need to have employees because we have not trained our own people. So therefore, we have imported nurses from Canada and outside the country because we lack nurses. I'm not too sure whether this question was answered or not, or perhaps I did not quite understand the response. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to get more elaboration on that. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will try and respond further; perhaps answering by way of that the funding that supplementary appropriation will be used for two years and after this they will have to negotiate with the nursing associations. They will have to negotiate with them. I believe that we will know by then if these will be included in the negotiations but the funding, we are talking about is for two years. I'm sure they will have an agreement sometime in the future with the nurses' associations. They will have to negotiate, that's why there is a clear bench on that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Killiktee.

Ms. Killiktee (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was wondering, if we are making some decisions that will be very difficult to staff in the future, and if we don't want to see the bonus, I was just thinking of future in the coming years, perhaps five to ten years after, I was thinking that we would not have nurses that we require. This is just a comment, Mr. Chairman, because I'm a bit concerned in some aspects of it in hearing the program, but there are some good aspects to it as well because it's funding. In the

future, looking in the longer term, we have to think carefully. I'm just making a comment. I don't have a question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Killiktee. I have no more names on my list under this page. Look at the Department of Health, Operations and Maintenance. \$9,916,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please turn to page 5. Community and Government Services, Operations and Maintenance. \$4.2 million. Any questions? Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess the question would be on this same project, I have it written down here, I think it was a little over \$4 million that was budgeted from CGS to help out with the ransomware attack at the Qulliq Energy Corporation had, and there was a \$3.2 million carry-over and now there's another \$4.2 million being requested. So that's \$7.4 million that will be used. I just like to know what it's going to be used for, for the bulk of it? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. If memory serves me, \$5,024,000 was appropriated initially. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It brings the combined total to \$7.4 million, Mr. Chairman. This amount is required to cover the IT operating model's first year of funding, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Go ahead, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: If I can, Mr. Chairman, if there's going to be more questions, I can do a substitution of my team. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. That might be prudent. Minister Kusugak, please exchange your witnesses.

Thank you. Just for the record again, Minister Kusugak, not that either of the gentlemen sitting with you are any strangers to the House, but for the record, please introduce your officials.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: In the left corner, Mr. Chairman... .

>> *Laughter*

Mr. Chairman, to my left is Mr. Kyle Seeley, Deputy Minister responsible for Community and Government Services, and to my right, Jeff Chown, Deputy Minister of Finance. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to change seats. I have no more questions. I'm kidding.

>> *Laughter*

On the substantiation sheets for the carryover for the project, if the minister can just enlighten the committee here; there is another IT cost that is \$5.1 million for 2022-23, 2024-25, and it goes on right until the end is 2026-27. Are those additional expenses that the Community and Government Services are going to have to give Qulliq Energy Corporation? If you can just explain what that sheet means. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just for clarity, the initial question that Mr. Savikataaq had asked and that minister responded to, it actually brings the total to \$9.24 million in the total of this because it was \$5,024,000 and now \$4.2 million being requested, so well over \$9 million, not the \$7 million that the minister spoke to with regard to Mr. Savikataaq's question. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just going off my briefing notes. That's where the \$7.4 million came from. It had requested \$3.2 million that lapsed in March 31, 2023. It carried over and then additional \$4.2 million. In terms of the ongoing costs, yes, Mr. Chairman, the answer to that question is yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm curious as to why Community and Government Services have an on-going cost of little over \$5 million to Qulliq Energy Corporation when that corporation is supposed to be a standalone corporation and raise the money that it spends. I'm just curious why there is a commitment now when there never was \$5 million into the corporation ongoing? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. If I could have Mr. Chown clarify the situation through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Chown.

Mr. Chown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So the intent of this is that the initial recovery and set-up costs in year one will be covered by CGS through this appropriation. There will be ongoing costs that CGS will be incurring. That would be the \$5.1 million you have referenced on behalf of the QEC, however, that will be billed back to QEC in future years so that, as you have said the QEC is its own entity; ratepayers should be covering the regular ongoing costs. So that will happen in 2024-2025 forward.

It is just this initial recovery year where the Government of Nunavut will be covering this supplementary appropriation. So CGS will incur the costs because they are administering

the network, but then instantly billing it back to nil cost to the core government. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was thinking and listening at the same time and sometimes I miss stuff but did the official just say that will start in 2024-25 or 2023-2024 that they are back-billing the Qulliq Energy Corporation? Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Chown.

Mr. Chown: 2024-25. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Is this for something that was not done before, or was not needed, or for new equipment? If I can just get an idea on what is the extra \$5 million ongoing is for? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's for contract services. 11 resources at \$1,500 a day at 220 days, a 20 percent contingency, and then there is bandwidth and end-user training, and it totals to that amount, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister for the explanation. I do not think I have any further questions, but since they could not spend the \$5 million which, I understand why, but not much time to spend that kind of money. I do not know if the minister can answer this, but is this anticipated extra \$7.5 million out of the \$9 million, will it be spent by the end of the fiscal year? That's my final question. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We believe so, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Currently I have no more names on my list. Mr. Malliki.

Mr. Malliki (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Regarding your request, do you believe that you have to increase it sometime in the future again? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. If I can just follow up on Mr. Savikataaq's line of questioning, I currently don't have any more names on my list, so until I hear otherwise, I'm just going to get some clarity.

Between Minister Kusugak's response, that the briefing note that the \$3.2 was requested, I just want to clarify in the information we have on the FAM-compliant carryovers on page 2 of 2, where it talks about the QEC ransom response, the original appropriation was \$5,024,000, as I said earlier, of which there was a remaining \$3.2 and change left in the FreeBalance, which is the accounting program, with the amount of \$3.2 million being requested as a carryover. Then, and I don't mean to confuse things as we will be dealing with that carryover later, but it is relevant to this \$4.2 million request, which brings the total cost of \$9.2 million and change for this ransomware event at the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

Just for the record, can I get clarity of those numbers? Minister Kusugak.

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

Chairman: Thank you. We will see if Mr. Chown's calculator and my calculator are in sync. Mr. Chown.

Mr. Chown: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You are correct with respect to that total number. Of that total number, there is still \$7.4 million to be spent in 2023-2024 forward. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you for confirming that. Again, I don't have any more names, I just have one final.

In the briefing information, one of the points that was raised was that the Qulliq Energy Corporation has a significant IT infrastructure that is currently deficit in areas, and then it lists a bunch of different things. I know the intent of this money is to deal with the ransomware response, not to supplement or support the Qulliq Energy Corporation IT Infrastructure exchange or as equipment falls off the useful life, purchasing new.

How much of these funds were utilized to update existing computer infrastructure that was already in the plan to be replaced or surplus? Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I don't know if we have the particular details to that, but I'm sure Mr. Seeley, through you, Mr. Chairman, would like to share some post estimates on those numbers, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Again, I am not concerned so much about the numbers, although Mr. Seeley will, I'm sure, happily provide that. I just want to make sure we're not duplicating processes using Government of Nunavut money versus what intended life-cycle replacement would be for Qulliq Energy. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think at the core of this is that the system that CGS has built for the use of the Qulliq Energy Corporation is a completely different system. The basic infrastructure that Qulliq Energy was operating on was anywhere between 10 to 15 years old and simply could not, would not have the capacity to operate a system as robust as our current core network requires. So it is a build from scratch.

One of the conditions that was examined, I guess, in building this budget and before coming forward to the House requesting the funding, was to take a look at what the capital investment from Qulliq would be and that just simply was not of a magnitude that would have supported replacing the basic switches across the territory that had just life cycled out, never mind replacing all the hardware in the communities and you running the fibre to each their different office sites and their regional headquarters.

So that basic life cycling and evergreening, as we say, is just not something that has been factored in. I do remember early on conversations that Qulliq Energy had a budget. It was, I'll say, less than half a million dollars per year for life cycling, which is not something would've dug them out of the situation that they're under to replace all the equipment that went right from servers, to switches, to the wires that connected to the desktops to make this project a reality. So there is a base zero budget that was put to go forward. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Seeley. Just one final; I know it has been talked here in the past during the Government of Nunavut's ransomware issue that we had, that sometimes that there is insurance for corporations or potentially governments to get insurance coverage on computer infrastructure. I just want to make sure that there are no insurance claims that are going to be proceeding on behalf of the Qulliq Energy Corporation for this ransomware event. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. I have no more names on my list. We are on page 5. Community Government Services. Operations and Maintenance. \$4.2 million. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go back to page 2. We are looking at *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2023-2024*. Schedule 1. Operations and Maintenance. \$14,116,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please go to Bill 24 on your legislation binder, the white one by your feet.

We will proceed. Bill 25, Supplementary Appropriation Capital Act... . Oops, sorry. That is the wrong one. Thank you. *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2023-2024*. Item 1. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Item 2?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Item 3. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Please go to the Schedule on page 2. Again, Vote 1. Operations and Maintenance. Total Supplementary Appropriation, \$14,116,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Line 4?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Line 5?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Line 6?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Line 7?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do members agree to Bill 24 as a whole?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Do the members agree to put Bill 24 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak, some closing comments?

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Just very briefly; thank you for your support. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Sergeant-at-Arms, please escort the witnesses out. We'll just take a two-minute break to get ready for Bill 25. Thank you.

>>*Committee recessed at 17:27 and resumed at 17:28*

Bill 25 – Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 2, 2023-2024 – Consideration in Committee

Chairman: Thank you. We'll turn that two-minute break into a one-minute break.

As we move to Bill 25, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 2, 2023-2024*. I'll ask Minister Kusugak if he has any opening comments. Please proceed.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appear before you today to present Bill 25, *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 2, 2023-2024*.

Through this bill, we are seeking \$169.9 million in supplementary capital appropriations for 2023-24, including \$164.7 million in previously approved funding from the 2022-23 fiscal year which needs to be carried over into the 2023-24 fiscal year, and \$5.2 million in new funding for three projects.

The \$164.7 million that we are requesting to carry forward is tied to 145 capital projects. \$159.1 million is allocated to 127 projects which are already started or where the GN has already made legal or financial commitments to start. The remaining carryover of \$5.7 million is associated with 18 projects which have not yet started.

These carryovers are based on estimates and projections. Final numbers will be determined once all entries have been recorded and the 2022-23 Public Accounts are completed. We will request final adjustments based on actual expenditures in the fall sitting.

Mr. Chairman, I would also like to note that about \$14 million of the total carryover relates to the North Qikiqtaaluk Energy Management Project and the Kivalliq Energy Management Project, which were approved in March 2021. These programs are non-cash items but they must be included in this appropriation for accounting purposes.

After removing the two energy projects, our 'core' carryover amount is approximately \$150.8 million. Since most of our capital projects are multi-year projects, we will always expect some level of carryovers. In addition to the projects in the carryover list, Bill 25 seeks \$5.2 million in new funding for three projects.

The first new funding item is \$5 million for the repairs of the Rankin Inlet Arena. The GN recently completed a two-year arbitration with the company who built the arena, related to deficiencies in its construction. From this arbitration, the GN received a \$5 million settlement from the contractor, which was deposited into our general revenue account based on standard accounting practices. An appropriation is needed to allow CGS to use this money to complete repairs to the arena.

The other two new funding items are budget increases for projects which have been targeted and received bids higher than the originally approved budgets. The project to build a new high school in Taloyoak requires an additional \$14.1 million and the Nunavut Recovery Centre requires an additional \$14.9 million for us to award the respective tenders. Both projects require money in latter years, but \$100,000 is included for each in 2023-24 to give the Assembly the opportunity to vote on the increased budget amounts before tenders are awarded.

Mr. Chairman and colleagues, I am available to address your questions about this supplementary appropriation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Do committee members have any general comments to the opening comments? Being none, please turn to page 4. *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act, No. 2, 2023-2024*. Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. \$41,000. Any questions? Thank you.

Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs. Capital. Total Department. \$41,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please turn to page 5. Department of Finance. Capital. Total Centrally Administered Funds. \$14,089,000. Any questions? I'm not seeing any hands come up. Centrally Administered Funds. \$14,089,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please turn to page 6. Department of Justice. Capital. Directorate. \$300,000. Any questions? Total Directorate, \$300,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Item 2. Corrections. \$5,172,000. Any questions? Thank you. Total Corrections. \$5,172,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please turn to page... . Sorry, one more item. Total Department. Department of Justice. *Supplementary Appropriation (Capital) Act No. 2, 2023-2024*. \$5,472,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Turn to page 7. Capital. Department of Culture and Heritage, \$450,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Page 8. We are looking at the Department of Education, Not previously authorized. Start of page 9. Corporate Services. Item 2. \$26,237,000. Any questions? Total Corporate Services, \$26,237,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Department of Health. Directorate. Item 1. \$16,383,000. Any questions? Department of Health. Capital. Total Department, \$16,383,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Department of Environment. Item 1. \$5,407,000. Any questions? There are none. Total Department, \$5,407,000. Agreed?

Some members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Please turn to page 12. Community and Government Services. Capital. Not previously authorized. Sorry. Go to page 13. Community and Government Services, totalling \$66,743,000. We'll start on page 14. Community and Government Services. Capital, \$76,405,000. Any questions? Mr. Qavvik. Mr. Qavvik, go ahead, please.

Mr. Qavvik: Can you hear me? There you go. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, colleagues.

On page 12, I have a question to Community and Government Services officials. It's for Sanikiluaq's hamlet office at \$5,915,000.

I am wondering whether this project will be cancelled, or will this project disappear and be carried over to the next fiscal year? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak. Sorry, Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Just waiting for my mic to go on. There we go. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No, the construction is going to proceed, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Qavvik.

Mr. Qavvik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. One, two, three, four, five; under Sanikiluaq Hamlet Office is a parking garage program and it's \$1,497,000. I believe we approved an appropriation of \$4 million for the parking garage program. I'm wondering why this fund has not been fully used. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is an application-based program. It gets funded as it moves forward from planning, design, construction, and different phases of the project. So it's funded as it moves forward, Mr. Chairman. You will see those amounts will decrease as they are being used. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Again, we're on page 14. Local Government Services. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one question here. On page 12 there, the Kinngait 525 Garage, for \$4.58 million, I'm just curious: how many years has this been carried over now? Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Just bear with me as we go back the years, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This entered planning 10 years ago in 2013. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Any other questions, members? Okay. Page 14. Sorry, Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, folks. On page 12, Baker Lake Intake Replacement Program; if I understand correctly, it's for the water pump house. Is that project on track? This project is to help mitigate the boil water advisories that happen multiple times a year in Baker Lake, the freshwater lake. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to clarify, it's not to fix the boil water advisory issues; it's supposed to be a dual-intake system to keep it from floating and that's what this will rectify, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the response and the clarification. Moving on, on page 13, near the bottom there, third-last one, "Nunavut – ICIP Undersea Fibre Optic Cable," \$18 million, I was under the impression that it's only

Iqaluit. Can I ask why this is classified now as Nunavut? Are there more communities that are going to be getting fibre optic? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, it's classified as Nunavut because it's under the ISS or ICS plan, so it would be classified as a Nunavut project. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Just for the record, Minister Kusugak, the acronym, if you could spell it out, the ICS that you mentioned. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Maybe Mr. Seeley, if Mr. Seeley can remind me of the acronym, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Seeley: Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.

>>Laughter

Chairman: Thank you. I think there was an echo on there. We got it twice. Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the response. Are we now looking at other communities to get fibre optic? I didn't get that part of the response. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This project in particular is specific to Iqaluit, but I know there are discussions outside the government about fibre optics across Nunavut. This particular one is Iqaluit-specific. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Simailak.

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank you again, minister, for the response. I'm glad you mentioned other projects outside of the government working on fibre optic. Since there are other entities outside of the Government of Nunavut working on fibre optic, why should the Government of Nunavut continue to work on fibre optic projects if the private sector can fund it and get it going? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'm not the appropriate minister to be responding to that. We're just responding to this funding request for \$18 million to deal

with the particular undersea fibre optic cable through the ICIP, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Chairman: Just to clarify, you're leaving that as the response; there is no deferral or anything on that. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Well, maybe Mr. Seeley could give a response to that, Mr. Chairman, and I assure you that there won't be an echo. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Echo, echo, echo. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, minister. The decision for the GN to pursue an undersea fibre network was a carefully considered one, starting, I think, close to seven or eight years ago in that the north or Nunavut at least was not a viable commercial market, which is a market that private sector firms would typically develop that kind of asset to provide the service in. For that reason, the GN at that time made the decision to advance this project to construct a fibre network to Iqaluit.

Since that time, a lot of things have changed. There has been increased expansion of fibre optic networks around the world. All major telecommunications providers in Canada have laid more fibre over the last couple of years, not less, and there is a lot of expansion in that area. The primary reason for the GN to pursue and make this a viable project is because it will provide a redundancy in our core network services to service communities. The fibre network will also decrease the dependency on the satellite link, thereby increasing the service quality across all Nunavut communities.

There are a couple of different rationales considered on establishing this fibre network and that's still the premise that we're proceeding under. We are in regular contact with commercial and other agencies that are newly interested in developing fibre to Nunavut and taking those proposals under consideration as they come in. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for recognizing me again. I just saw something here that I just wanted to point out. It's on the same page, page 12, Grise Fiord water reservoir tank emergency, and the carryover of \$1.2 million. How much of an emergency was it that the money was not spent? Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Kusugak.

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

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank the minister. I think that this is a case of the title of that project line needing to be updated. That project was initiated and initially approved as an emergency due to the failure of the water containment system in Grise Fiord and rightfully approved so that the department could execute those repairs. Those repairs are still underway and with additional upgrades being completed. It is, admittedly, a bit of a dated title, but it most certainly was an emergency at the time that the project was titled and added to the plan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Savikataaq.

Mr. Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will just be a comment. Mr. Chairman, all we have to go is by what's in front of us and there should be no misleading titles. Just check it all out before it's turned over to us for us to make a decision. Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. I'll take that as just a comment. Mr. Anavilok.

Mr. Anavilok: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The \$548,000 carryover for the water treatment plant, we just had a boil advisory. What are the service upgrades for the water treatment plant? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Kusugak.

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'll assume that that was for Kugluktuk. Okay. If I could have Mr. Seeley respond to those particulars through you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Seeley.

Mr. Seeley: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The water treatment plant in Kugluktuk, the intake is located in the Coppermine River. Naturally, seasonal runoff contributes to high levels of turbidity within that source water and it's taken into the water treatment plant. The water treatment plant is designed and operates on a cartridge filtration system. That system just doesn't have the capacity to deal with that level of sediment during these seasonal runoff periods.

There are some upgrades being made to enhance the coagulation and flocculation sedimentation process within that plant in the upcoming year to help address the high turbidity and ensure that the drinking water in Kugluktuk meets the Canadian drinking water standards moving forward.

Until those repairs and upgrades are completed, the community will, unfortunately, have periods of high sedimentation impacting the water quality, but the project is underway and the request here is to carry the funding over so that we can continue with that important work. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Ms. Brewster.

Ms. Brewster: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to request that the Chair rise to report progress. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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

Minister and your officials can depart the witness table at your convenience.

Speaker: Item 20. Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Hickes.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, your committee has been considering Bills 24 and 25 and would like to report that Bill 24 is 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.

Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Is there a seconder? Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 21. Third Reading of Bills. I recognize the Minister of Finance, Mr. Kusugak.

Item 21: Third Reading of Bills

Bill 24 – Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2023-2024 – Third Reading

Hon. Lorne Kusugak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Quttiktuq, that Bill 24, *Supplementary Appropriation (Operations and Maintenance) Act, No. 1, 2023-2024*, be read for the [third] time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker: The motion is in order. To the motion.

Some Hon. Members (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 24 is ready for assent.

Item 22. *Orders of the Day*. Ms. Weaver.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Ms. Weaver: *Orders of the Day* for May 30, 2023:

1. Prayer
2. Ministers' Statements

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

>>*Applause*

Speaker: This House stands adjourned until Tuesday, May 30, at 1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 17:54*

