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Iqaluit

Speaker: The Honourable Paul Quassa, MLA

Legislative Assembly of Nunavut

Speaker

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(Quttiktuq)

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of Human Resources*

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(Amittuq)

Pauloosie Keyootak
(Uqqummiut)

David Qamaniq
(Tununiq)

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Hon. Joe Savikataaq
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Minister responsible for Indigenous
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(Arviat North-Whale Cove)

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(Pangnirtung)
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Minister of Languages; Minister
responsible for the Nunavut Housing
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Craig Simailak
(Baker Lake)

Hon. George Hickey
(Iqaluit-Tasiluk)

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Minister responsible for Labour; Minister
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responsible for the Status of Women*

Hon. David Joanasic
(South Baffin)

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for Nunavut Arctic College*

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**Iqaluit, Nunavut
Friday, March 5, 2021**

Members Present:

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

>>House commenced at 9:00

Item 1: Opening Prayer

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

>>Prayer

Speaker (interpretation): Good morning. We say “good morning” to Nunavummiut and those who are following the proceedings. Welcome once again.

Let’s proceed. Ministers’ Statements. Minister of Environment, Mr. Savikataaq.

Item 2: Ministers’ Statements

**Minister’s Statement 577 – 5(2):
Youth Science Camp in Territorial
Parks and Nunavut Parks Awards**

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To the people of Arviat, I say “good day” to you and you have my sympathies.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with my colleagues the success of the Territorial Parks youth camps that took place this past summer in Kugluktuk and Kimmirut, and to highlight the Nunavut Parks Awards for our high school students.

Mr. Speaker, youth camps at our territorial parks offer young people an opportunity to learn about local wildlife, the Inuit seasonal cycle and other traditional knowledge from local elders and park staff, to foster their understanding of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* and science. With social distancing measures in place, participants came together in limited groups in outdoor spaces. I am happy to announce that both of last summer’s successful youth camps had over 30 youth and elders. The participants learned about the history of the parks, local legends and myths, traditional plant and rock use, as well as wilderness survival skills.

Mr. Speaker, our youth are our future, and we encourage them to pursue learning that will lead to employment opportunities in environmental fields. Since 2017, Nunavut Parks Awards have been presented to high school students in communities around our territorial parks who have achieved the best marks in parks-related courses, such as Aulajaaqtut or environmental studies. In 2020 each recipient of the Nunavut Parks Award received \$500.

Mr. Speaker I would like to acknowledge these students for their work and achievements:

- Jaydin Nungaq from Iqaluit,
- Iola Michael from Kimmirut,
- Rosemary Arreak from Clyde River,
- Allie Cookie from Sanikiluaq,
- Makpa Ulluqsi from Rankin Inlet,
- Kaelan Paniyoak from Kugluktuk, and
- Daxter Maniyogina from Cambridge Bay.

Mr. Speaker, our territorial parks are unique landscapes cherished by Nunavummiut. By engaging young people in youth science camps and celebrating academic success in parks-related fields, we ensure that our culture thrives and our lands continue to be promoted, protected, and enjoyed. I am proud of this work to create sustainable, intergenerational learning opportunities for Nunavummiut. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

**Minister's Statement 578 – 5(2):
Baker Lake Community Freezer**

Hon. David Akeeagok (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise before the members today to reaffirm my department's support and commitment to assisting Nunavut municipalities, hunters and trappers organizations, and harvesters in acquiring and maintaining important harvesting infrastructure for our communities. Harvesting plays a

vital role in the social economy and we as a department support and understand this and will collaborate with the communities to ensure that the Country Food Distribution Program is utilized to the needs of each unique community.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, this current year my department entered into a multi-year agreement with the Hamlet of Baker Lake to provide the community with \$799,000 in program funding to design and build a new community freezer in Baker Lake.

>>Applause

Funding for the project is being provided through my department's Country Food Distribution Program as well as through leveraged funding under the Canadian Agricultural Partnership agreement with Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada and harvesting infrastructure funding from the Canadian Northern Regional Development Agency. This freezer for Baker Lake will replace an older smaller freezer that had fallen into disrepair and which the community had outgrown.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to confirm that all the components for the new community freezer for Baker Lake were manufactured and shipped to the community in the fall of 2020. The final assembly, power hook-up, and start-up of the community freezer will be completed in the summer of 2021.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate Mayor Aksawnee, the Hamlet of Baker Lake, and the Baker Lake Hunters and Trappers Organization for its hard work on this project. This collaboration between our organizations is a great

example of how various levels of government, hunters and trappers organizations, harvesters, and communities can work together to support our harvesters and to help address food insecurity in our communities. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

**Minister's Statement 579 – 5(2):
Nunavut Vaccine Campaign**

Hon. Lorne Kusugak (interpretation): Good morning, Mr. Speaker. As well, residents of Rankin Inlet and Nunavummiut, I wish you a good day.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, today, I am pleased to announce that as of yesterday the Department of Health has administered 8,628 first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and 5,125 second doses of the vaccine, for a total of 13,753 doses given. By the end of this month all communities will have held clinics for at least the first dose of the vaccine.

>>Applause

Hats off to the vaccination team, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as we have stated previously, I am happy to announce that we will have received the expected allotment of 38,000 vaccines by mid-March. This is enough to vaccinate 75 percent of the adult population in Nunavut.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to announce the expansion of Iqaluit's vaccine clinic to include all individuals aged 18 or older beginning March 15.

>>Applause

The GN's approach of focused vaccination clinics in Iqaluit has allowed effective and efficient distribution of the vaccine to all Nunavummiut while ensuring priority is given to people most at risk of severe disease from COVID-19.

Iqaluit Public Health will be booking appointments for all individuals 18 or older beginning on March 10. Iqaluit Public Health respectfully requests that people wait to call for their appointments until that time to allow them to complete their latest round of vaccinations. We ask that Iqalumiut call to make an appointment at 975-4810.

(interpretation) Let me repeat that in Inuktitut. Iqaluit Public Health will be booking appointments for all individuals 18 or older beginning on March 10. We ask that Iqalumiut call to make an appointment at 975-4810.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, this vaccine is safe. It has been tested. It cannot give you COVID-19. It is the best protection we have in Nunavut to prevent serious illness, hospitalization, and death. This vaccine is a way to get things back to normal. It will allow us to gather, have fishing derbies, do community feasts, square dances, and visit our elders more safely.

Mr. Speaker, as we aim to have 60 percent of Nunavummiut vaccinated, we

must remember that, for now, people under 18 years are unable to get the vaccine. Nunavut has a very young population, which means all of us adults must lead by example and get this vaccine. I myself recently received my vaccination and I urge all Nunavummiut to do the same and get vaccinated. So far, response to the vaccine across Nunavut has been mostly positive, but we can still do better.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank all the staff at the Department of Health, our partners within the GN, and the hamlets, who have helped to ensure our vaccine campaign moves quickly, efficiently, and safely. From delivering and administering this vaccine, to booking charters, to purchasing equipment like freezers, this has been a whole-of-government response and we can be proud of that, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. That's great news. Ministers' Statements. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Ms. Ehaloak.

**Minister's Statement 580 – 5(2):
Qulliq Energy Corporation
Launches Commercial and
Institutional Power Producer
Program**

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Good morning to my colleagues and those that are watching.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to make an announcement today that I hope will bring a renewed energy to Nunavut's

power supply mix. The Qulliq Energy Corporation has launched the Commercial and Institutional Power Producer (CIPP) program and has begun accepting applications. The Commercial and Institutional Power Producer program will allow existing government institutions and business customers to install renewable systems on their existing business premises. This clean energy will be sold to the Qulliq Energy Corporation to use to power our communities.

I am proud to present this program that will spark local development of renewable resources while also working to ensure Nunavummiut, who pay the highest rates for power in Canada, do not pay more for the benefit of clean power. Mr. Speaker, this program will not only reduce diesel use in the territory, but also enable community institutions, including arenas and freezers or local business, to earn money by selling clean power to the Qulliq Energy Corporation.

I truly appreciate the benefits of the new program as it is intended to help build economic growth in our communities while supporting federal and territorial environmental goals. While promoting energy self-reliance, the Commercial and Institutional Power Producer program also supports Pivaallirutivut, the Government of Nunavut's priority to develop and manage renewable and non-renewable resources for the long-term benefit of Nunavummiut.

I should also take a moment to remind all Nunavummiut that if they wish to install renewable systems at home, the Qulliq Energy Corporation is accepting applications for the corporation's Net

Metering Program and I encourage them to apply.

Mr. Speaker, the Qulliq Energy Corporation remains vigilant in their work to continue developing programs that promote the use of renewable energy. In conjunction with this program, the corporation is also developing the Independent Power Producer (IPP) program, which will allow larger community scale renewable energy installations to further lessen environmental impacts on our land.

For more information on how you can play a part in producing energy for our communities, please visit the Qulliq Energy Corporation's website at www.qec.nu.ca. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

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

**Minister's Statement 581 – 5(2):
Arviligruaq Ilinniarvik Wins Two
National Engineering Awards**

Hon. David Joanasié (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Nunavummiut.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, since opening in 2019, Arviligruaq Ilinniarvik has enriched the lives of the people of Kugaaruk, enabling them to come together and share knowledge, culture, and values. This school has become an inspiring place for students, staff, and the community, and has been recognized nationally for the benefits it has brought to Kugaaruk.

For its part in designing and engineering Arviligruaq Ilinniarvik, Accutech Engineering Inc. was recognized by the 2020 Canadian Consulting Engineering Awards, winning both the 2020 Engineering a Better Canada Award and the 2020 Award of Excellence.

Mr. Speaker, the 2020 Engineering a Better Canada Award is presented to the project that best showcases how engineering enhances the social, economic or cultural quality of life of Canadians.

The 2020 Award of Excellence is presented in recognition of the best consulting engineering projects in Canada, of which Arviligruaq Ilinniarvik was one of 20 recipients. Hooray for that!

Mr. Speaker, this recognition is a testament to the quality of the contractors the Government of Nunavut selects for its construction projects. Accutech Engineering Inc. worked quickly and creatively to meet the challenges of designing and building a school in Kugaaruk under a tight deadline.

The Department of Education would like to congratulate Accutech Engineering Inc. on winning these two awards. Their hard work to deliver a state-of-the-art school within 24 months has provided Kugaaruk a place that all members of the community can be proud of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>>Applause

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. We are very proud of the development of our schools. Ministers' Statements.

Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

**Minister's Statement 582 – 5(2):
Director of Infrastructure
Appointment at Nunavut Housing
Corporation**

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, people of Pangnirtung and Nunavummiut.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to share with members that the Government of Nunavut recently appointed Mr. Juanie Pudluk as Director of Infrastructure for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Originally from Resolute Bay, Mr. Pudluk is an electrical engineer who graduated from the University of Ottawa. He worked for the Qulliq Energy Corporation and the Department of Community and Government Services prior to coming to the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

Mr. Pudluk first joined us on a transfer assignment last year. I am pleased that he has decided to stay and offer his expertise and experience as an (interpretation ends) infrastructure engineer and logistics coordinator. (interpretation) I am very proud of Mr. Pudluk's professional achievements and welcome him to the role of Director of Infrastructure at the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Pudluk's appointment is another example of how the Nunavut Housing Corporation is fulfilling the *Turaaqtavut* mandate through the Katujjiqatigiinnivut priority by continuing to strengthen human

resource capacity across the public service and increasing Inuit employment. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Minister's Statement 583 – 5(2):
Workforce Development
Agreement Funding**

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik
(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a brief comment that what I'm wearing was made by Bernadette Natsiapik. She makes me proud.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the Government of Nunavut receives \$2.8 million from the Government of Canada each year through the Workforce Development Agreement. This funding provides training and employment services to Nunavummiut who are ineligible for employment insurance benefits.

This year, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada has provided the Nunavut government with an additional \$3 million in Workforce Development Agreement funding to assist with economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to finish my statement.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The minister is seeking unanimous consent to conclude

her ministerial statement. Are there any nays? (interpretation) There are no nays. Please proceed, Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(interpretation ends) My department has identified 10 initial projects to fund from the additional funds, including:

- Remote Learning Pilot Project - to enable qualified Nunavummiut to access remote learning opportunities.
- Construction Worker Registry - to create a web-based tool to connect Nunavummiut with construction skills to potential employers.
- Client Workstations - to install client workstations in all career development and income assistance offices to enable client access to government information, training information and job search tools.
- Career Development Office Safety Upgrades - for office renovations and upgrades to better organize office space to prevent the spread of airborne illnesses.
- Nunavut Arctic College Kivalliq Hall Refurbishment - to replace mattresses and worn-out residence furniture in Kivalliq Hall in Rankin Inlet that can no longer be adequately cleaned for the purposes of preventing the spread of infection.
- Hunter and Trapper Organizations - \$5,000 grants for the purpose of on-the-land skills training for youth.
- High Schools - \$5,000 grants to purchase equipment, tools, and supplies for the purposes of offering locally developed trades training courses.

- Hamlet of Arviat - for the purchase of three heavy equipment operator simulators to increase capacity to offer heavy equipment operator training for employment with the hamlet and mining sector.
- Virtual Learning Specialist Pilot Project - to enable individuals who are interested in taking the trades entrance exam to receive support and tutoring through remote assistance.
- Apprenticeship and Skilled Trades Worker Students - all graduates of level 1 technical training will now receive a set of hand tools appropriate to their chosen trade.

Mr. Speaker, I am very appreciative of the improvements and opportunities this funding will provide. I would like to encourage Nunavummiut to take advantage of the new projects and opportunities made available. Public announcements will be made once projects are up and running.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Ministers' Statements are over. Continuing on. Members' Statements. Member for Gjoa Haven, Mr. Akoak.

Item 3: Members' Statements

Member's Statement 828 – 5(2): Aged Fish or Dog Meat

Mr. Akoak: *Quanaqqutit*, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) I say "good morning" to everyone, as well as the residents of my community, and if my wife is watching, I say "good morning" to you. She is able to come here, but only if she gets

approved, (interpretation ends) so I'm hoping for good news today.

(interpretation) I rise this morning to speak about a personal experience as sometimes as people, we don't always hear the state words properly so we mishear the words spoken, and especially more so when you are a younger person talking with an elder as they can misunderstand each other if they don't hear the word spoken.

Back in the day, when we first got together as a couple, we travelled to her home town of Taloyoak, and I followed her. My in-law, Mr. Tony Ittunga who is now deceased (interpretation ends) but he was a very, very good friend. (interpretation) In recalling this story, I remembered and felt appreciative of him.

Anyway, back then, my in-law was always distributing country foods to the Inuit families to assist his fellow citizens, who lived in the same community. Once I heard him talking on the local radio, so I listened in. I thought I heard him very clearly, saying "If you wish to eat some dog meat, you can go outside his shed and pick up some pieces, if they wanted to eat dog meat.

I thought I heard that as when I was five years old, I was sent off to Inuvik and I lost my language completely and I was inducted into school there and at Yellowknife as well as Cambridge Bay. I did not know what they were called, so when I first went to Taloyoak, I thought I heard the saying about eating dog meat which was available outside his house.

It turned out that my in-law was talking about cached meat that was aged, and he

was saying *qirngniq* and that if people wanted aged meat...

>> *Laughter*

(interpretation ends) ...aged fish and, Mr. Speaker, I would rather have aged fish than the other. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Laughter*

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Iqaluit-Manirajak, Mr. Lightstone.

**Member's Statement 829 – 5(2):
Yukon Housing Initiative Fund**

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning and happy Friday to all.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to announce that today I will be tabling information on the Government of Yukon's Housing Initiative Fund. Mr. Speaker, the Government of Yukon created this fund in 2017 to provide capital grants for affordable housing initiatives for projects aimed at addressing the housing shortage.

Mr. Speaker, over the last three years this fund has supported 33 projects which created over 350 new residential units. The fund has done so by providing contributions of \$60,000 to \$90,000 a unit for targeted initiatives by providing additional consideration to projects that aim to meet the needs of seniors, tenants earning less than the corporation's household income limits, homeless, and/or youth projects.

Mr. Speaker, a similar program in Nunavut would greatly address our own housing shortage.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation, in collaboration with the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, continued to construct public housing units at an increasing rate. In the most recent 2019-2020 annual report, the corporation identified the completion of 85 new units as well as continued construction of 80 additional units. In total these units represent nearly \$130 million in construction costs for the year.

Mr. Speaker, this is a significant investment and should not be undermined, but it represents a majority of the investment in Nunavut's housing industry. The Nunavut Housing Corporation's construction costs continue to rise, and the average cost recently reached \$650,000. It has been noted that the private sector is able to conduct business in a more efficient manner, and I believe this remains true with housing construction.

Mr. Speaker, in other jurisdictions, the government's investments represent a less significant fraction of the housing industry. However, I believe that a similar housing fund in Nunavut is essential to encouraging the housing industry to play a more active role in addressing our housing shortage and the need for affordable housing.

Mr. Speaker, at the appropriate time, I will have questions to the minister on the topic. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements.

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

Member's Statement 830 – 5(2): Let's Build Each Other Up

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish a "good morning" to the residents of Chesterfield Inlet, along with those of Rankin Inlet. Further, Ms. Ugjuk is one of our elders.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue my weeklong tirade against discrimination and racism against others with different skin colours. Nonetheless, I want to state today, I sometimes notice other Inuit, as I too am an Inuk, whenever an Inuk amongst us starts to prove their capabilities, it seems many other Inuit only see the "*ajuqtuq*" perception, where we automatically place other Inuit in this category as non-capable.

We should not be belittling others, and we as Inuit, are all quite capable and our mental perceptions have to be switched towards supporting others when we see other Inuit who are improving their capabilities. Our Premier and Speaker examples; they are quite capable and skilled in their roles.

We as Inuit have to adopt that mentality to no longer automatically belittle other Inuit as we have been too well-trained to put down other Inuit and to put non-Inuit on a pedestal, and so we must change that colonial perception. Let us lift each other up as Inuit, rather than be our own worst enemies and support our Premier and other Inuit leaders who are representing us, and to learn to celebrate our common capabilities.

We should also always mention from time to time that Inuit are very capable and skilled, so please keep moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

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

**Member's Statement 831 – 5(2):
Arviat - Post Lockdown**

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, my colleagues. (interpretation ends) It is Friday, and I did want to make a fun statement about how great the Maple Leafs are doing this year, but I do have other matters I do need to address today.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, (interpretation ends) Arviat has now been on lockdown for well over 100 days. I think we're somewhere around day 115. To be honest, I haven't been keeping count.

I do look forward to the day when the lockdown here in Arviat will end, but I'm concerned that when it does end, there will be some lingering negative effects faced by my constituents, and this is based on what I'm hearing from them in terms of the backlog of needs, and as such, I feel that it would be appropriate to plan for a way to catch up and address the backlog that the lockdown will have created in this community.

(interpretation) Mr. Speaker, I want the government to consider coming up with a plan to uplift the people of Arviat. (interpretation ends) I'm calling on the

government to consider developing a recovery plan for the community of Arviat that would combat the long-term effects of being in a lockdown and help the community catch up in areas such as health care, mental health counselling and support, dental care, development and renovation of existing housing, business development and support, education, including K to 12 and adult education, basic government services, social work and family support, and also child care.

Mr. Speaker, there may be areas that I have not addressed in my statement, such as justice or culture and heritage, and just for clarity, I'm not proposing or suggesting a reopening plan, which is within the Department of Health. I am suggesting a recovery plan to help this community get back on its feet once the lockdown is over.

At the appropriate time I will have questions for the Premier on this subject. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. Member for Cambridge Bay, Ms. Ehaloak.

**Member's Statement 832 – 5(2):
Kitikmeot Heritage Society**

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to give congratulations to the Kitikmeot Heritage Society, which is celebrating their 25-year anniversary. Tomorrow on Saturday, March 6, at 1:30 Mountain Standard Time, they will be having a virtual celebration on Facebook and once COVID restrictions have been lifted, they will have a community

gathering to celebrate that.
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Members' Statements. I have no more names on my list. Continuing on. Returns to Oral Questions. Minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, Ms. Nakashuk.

Item 4: Returns to Oral Questions

Return to Oral Question 1165 – 5(2): Public Housing Construction Plans

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to respond back to a question that Netsilik MLA, Emiliano Qirngnuq, had asked on February 26 regarding the public housing construction plans.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to provide a response to an oral question from February 26, 2021 regarding Inuit employment specified in a tender for public housing units to be built in Taloyoak.

Mr. Speaker, the Nunavut Housing Corporation determines the percentage of Inuit labour required on any given construction contract based on experience from past contracts in each community. The corporation strives to employ as many Inuit as possible on all projects, as required under the NNI Regulations on Inuit employment for government contracts.

The corporation's procurement division that analyzed Inuit employment recommended against the percentage achieved on construction projects in the community in the past eight years. The

procurement division also accounts for other construction projects that may be taking place at the same time in the community, which may affect the corporation's ability to employ a certain percentage of Inuit for certain projects.

In the case of the construction tender for the two five-plexes in Taloyoak in 2021-22, the corporation assessed that the Inuit labour share of 30 percent was achievable and specified this as the required level of Inuit labour for construction. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Return to Oral Question 1167 – 5(2): Public Housing Tenants and COVID-19

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I rise today to supplement an answer I provided on February 25 regarding the request for information on the COVID-19 impact on housing activities, such as maintenance, modernization and improvement, renovation work for existing units, and construction activities in the constituency of Arviat North-Whale Cove.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation is fortunate to have minimal impact on the modernization and improvement work in Mr. Main's community due to COVID-19. Seven projects were delayed due to seasonal delays causing late sealift, and one was delayed to COVID-19 impacts. This project consists of demotion of two

units. Seasonal delays are common, which is why our modernization and improvement projects are undertaken in multiple years. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Return to Oral Question 1170 – 5(2):
Public Housing Construction Plans**

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is my final return to oral question.

(interpretation ends) I rise today to provide an answer to a question I took on notice on February 26, 2021 regarding the tenders for public housing units to be built in Rankin Inlet.

Mr. Speaker, the construction tender will be issued for 20 units in Rankin Inlet between March 15 and 30, 2021. In the tender, the Nunavut Housing Corporation assessed that an Inuit labour share of 30 percent was attainable and specified this as the required level of Inuit labour for construction.

This is the question that was asked by Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet MLA Cathy Towtongie. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Returns to Oral Questions. Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

**Return to Oral Question 1206 – 5(2):
Fiscal Update**

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to supplement a response with an oral question asked yesterday by MLA Adam Lightstone, Question No. 1206 – 5(2), regarding the fiscal update.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to address some information provided to the Assembly yesterday. Yesterday MLA Lightstone asked me several questions relating to the Government of Nunavut's financial situation.

Mr. Speaker, at the time I was confused by some of the numbers the member quoted in this Chamber. As members know, the member is well known for creating his own financial statements and creative spreadsheets, which are sometimes a mystery and shrouded in unknowns. Mr. Speaker, looking back, it is clear the member has misunderstood some of the basic accounting at play, and made some calculations and statements that merit follow-up today.

Accumulated Surplus

Mr. Speaker, I would like to correct the member and help remove the shroud of secrecy created and explain some of these concepts, starting with the \$2,885,000,000 “accumulated surplus” he mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, some people mistake this accounting measure as an extra pile of funds the Government of Nunavut could be spending to address public priorities. Frankly, if I thought the Government of Nunavut was hoarding this much money,

I would be angry too. However, this is not the case and a common source of confusion; the member can't be faulted for not understanding.

At its core, this measure is an accounting of all government-owned assets. It has three main components: the annual operating surplus/deficit, tangible capital assets, and other non-financial assets such as inventory.

Mr. Speaker and members, of our government's \$2,885,000,000 in reported accumulated surplus nearly \$2.6 billion, or about 90 percent, is from the value of our "tangible capital assets" – these are mostly buildings like schools, health centres, tank farms, power generators, and airports.

Mr. Speaker and members, a further \$36 million of the accumulated surplus relates to "inventories for use" – the materials and supplies we use to keep our schools, power generators, and health centres running and to deliver our other programs.

Mr. Speaker, unless the member is suggesting we use some major accounting wizardry or sell off some hospital supplies or perhaps a school or two to pay for operations, members can be comfortable knowing our accumulated surplus is already being put to good use across the territory.

Annual Surpluses

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to address the annual surpluses the member feels we should be spending. These annual surpluses are the final consolidated total of all departments and public agencies,

after taking into account departmental lapses and uncompleted projects.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Lightstone is correct in noting that our operating surpluses for the past three years have averaged \$112 million, but I would like to provide nuance. We reported surpluses of about \$82 million in 2019-2020, about \$95 million in 2018-19, and a whopping \$161 million in 2017-18. This was the year we received the federal contribution of \$74 million for the Iqaluit airport project, driving up our reported surplus at year-end and Mr. Lightstone's calculated average.

A more sophisticated approach looks beyond the operating surpluses to also take into account the wear and tear on our assets and the use of inventory. When we do, we report changes in net financial assets that are substantially less: a \$9.4 million increase in 2019-2020, a \$12 million decrease in 2018-19, and an \$11.9 million decrease in 2017-18.

To me, this shows that over the past few years we have been delivering programs to Nunavummiut and continuing to build up our public infrastructure while maintaining basically the same level of net financial assets, what we have on hand after we pay off whatever we owe.

Mr. Speaker, all this information is readily available to all in our Public Accounts.

Cash

Mr. Speaker, the member also reference the amount of surplus cash the Government of Nunavut has available.

I do agree it is significant, but again, some clarification is necessary.

Part of our large cash balance relates to how and when the Government of Nunavut receives money from the federal government. About 93 percent of our annual revenues come from Canada, mostly through large transfers that regularly deposit cash in our banks.

Mr. Speaker, as the most significant example, the Territorial Formula Financing arrangement alone provided us with about \$1.7 billion this year. We receive a \$116 million cash deposit every month for that transfer alone. Unless we spend cash as quickly as we receive it, our balance goes up over time.

We know the public wants us to spend money wisely rather than simply shove it out the door, but investing public resources means working with the size and capacity of the territory, which can be challenging. Vacancies within the government, a small private sector, construction delays, and other challenges sometimes limit us in terms of how quickly we spend.

Yes, the member did hit on a significant set of challenges and in some ways the cash balances is a symptom of those challenges, but the balance itself should not be the main concern. We need to continue working together to address the underlying challenges. How can we fill government vacancies? How can we continue to grow our private sector?

Mr. Speaker, this does raise a question of what we should do with the cash we have. We limit ourselves to what types of investments we make. In today's low

interest rate environment, however, there is not much out there.

Mr. Speaker, I do think we are currently holding onto more cash than we need, but not for the reasons that Member Lightstone indicated.

Members will be interested to know we have already recognized the importance of dealing with this. When I appear before you next week to discuss my department's business plan, members may notice a priority that the department has set for itself about formalizing its approach to managing the Government of Nunavut's treasury, including cash.

Mr. Speaker and members, this is yet another step we are taking towards improving our financial sophistication as a government, along the same lines as the financial statement discussion and analysis and consolidated budgets for projects we have already undertaken in recent years. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

>> *Applause*

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Returns to Oral Questions. I have no more names on my list. Continuing on. Recognition of Visitors in the Gallery. Welcome to those listening by way of radio and TV. Continuing on. Oral Questions. Member for Iqaluit-Niaqunngu, Ms. Angnakak.

Item 6: Oral Questions

Question 1214 – 5(2): Legal Services Board

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice.

As the minister is aware, the operations of the Legal Services Board are funded by the Department of Justice, and as the minister will recall, the board's 2017-18 annual report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 4, 2020.

I'm wondering if the minister can indicate when the board's outstanding annual reports for the 2018-19 and 2019-2020 fiscal years will be ready for tabling in the House and made available to MLAs and the general public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In my most recent briefing, I wasn't made aware of a timeline on those annual reports, so I will have to check with my officials and get back to the member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the board's most recently tabled annual report, the chairperson indicated that "Some tough choices will need to be in the next year, if the Department of Justice doesn't support or advocate for additional funds for the Legal Services Board of Nunavut. The Board and management will be asking the Minister of Justice to decide what legal services should be reduced or cut on behalf of Nunavummiut."

Mr. Speaker, the budget for the Legal Services Board has remained unchanged since the 2017-18 fiscal year and is not projected to increase by so much as a penny for the next three fiscal years.

Can the minister confirm how much funding the board requested for the upcoming 2021-22 fiscal year, and can he clarify how the government determined the amount that the board will actually receive? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the member's interest in this. I do acknowledge that as we continue to grow, and the challenges with the court system right now, obviously has a factor to play, but the Legal Services Board has 64 PYs that are currently employed. We have a number of different contracted lawyers. To my knowledge, they have been maintaining within their budget amounts. I would have to, again, go back to my officials to see what cost pressures that the Legal Services Board are proposing to request an increase in their budget line. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the minister's response, and I look forward to hearing back from him on what he found out and how much more support they can anticipate in getting.

The Department of Justice business plan indicates that the Legal Services Board is committed to assigning Nunavut Inuit lawyers priority during the hiring and recruitment process, and plans to make positions available to graduates of the Nunavut law program. That's encouraging news, Mr. Speaker.

Can the minister indicate how much additional funding the board will require to allow it to hire graduates of this program? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The member is correct; the Legal Services Board is very interested in articling students and have opened an opportunity for up to three articling students.

Mr. Speaker, there wasn't any budget added to the Legal Services Board. They have funded from within, and in fact, last year they surplused dollars. I'm not sure where the member is getting some of the information from on their deficit situation. They've have never had a deficit, but they are funding those positions from within, and I'm looking forward to a number of articling positions that the Government of Nunavut is supporting from that class. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1215 – 5(2): Human Rights Tribunal

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning to the people of Baker Lake. I hope you have a wonderful weekend.

Mr. Speaker, my questions today are for the Minister of Justice. As the minister is aware, the operations of the Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal are funded by the Department of Justice. It has now been almost a year since an annual report for the tribunal was tabled in the Legislative Assembly, and that was for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Can the minister indicate when the tribunal's outstanding annual reports for the 2018-19 and 2019-2020 fiscal years will be ready for tabling in the House and made available to MLAs and the general public? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hate to sound like a broken record, but when I attended my last briefing I neglected to ask for a timeline on that and I will speak to my officials and get to the member with a timeline on that for tabling. Thank you.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister for that commitment to get back to me. It is much appreciated.

In the tribunal's most recently tabled annual report, the chairperson indicated that "With no human rights commission in Nunavut, the Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal's communication with the public is key to help people understand their options to address potential discrimination."

Mr. Speaker, I am not fully convinced that the general public is clearly aware of how the role of the Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal differs from that of such bodies as the Labour Standards Board, which has jurisdiction over some issues involving employment disputes.

Can the minister indicate the extent to which he is satisfied with the tribunal's efforts in this area? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate this question. The human rights tribunal is a body in Nunavut that people can turn to if they feel that their rights under the *Nunavut Human Rights Act* have been violated.

It is a very important office, Mr. Speaker, and communication is a key component of that. I will just take a quick moment to put a plug in that if people do have questions or concerns, they can call 1-888-220-1011 or email nunavuthumanrights@gov.nu.ca.

Mr. Speaker, there have been some challenges with the capacity of that office and the Department of Justice has recently entered into a mentorship agreement with the first executive director of the human rights tribunal to

mentor and support the staff in Coral Harbour.

Mr. Speaker, the former executive director is in Coral Harbour now and working with staff to get their annual reports up to date and make sure that they examining all the efficiencies to make sure that Nunavummiut get the best service possible.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Labour Standards Board, it is an administrative tribunal. It was established 21 years, almost to the day under the *Labour Standards Act*. Like the member stated, the board does hear concerns from either employers or employees, about the decisions from the labour standards officer.

Mr. Speaker, I'll also take an opportunity to put the contact information out there. The phone number is 867-975-6159 or email nlsb@gov.nu.ca. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Simailak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, minister. I was interested to note that the Nunavut Human Rights Tribunal's most recent annual report indicated that "Cases rarely proceed to a pre-hearing/hearing, as most cases are settled through mediation."

Can the minister clarify the extent to which travel restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted the tribunal's mediation program and can he confirm how much of a case

backlog the tribunal is currently facing?
Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr.
Speaker. The COVID and the travel
limitations haven't impacted very much
at all. There are currently two
complaints open in the current fiscal
year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1216 – 5(2): Polar Bear Management

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank
you, Mr. Speaker. To my fellow
residents of Netsilik, I say “good
morning” to you. I'm sure that some of
you are now awake.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, my
questions are for the Minister of
Environment, and they concern the issue
of polar bear management.

As the minister will recall, I have raised
the issue the M'Clintock Channel and
Gulf of Boothia polar bear
subpopulations on a number of
occasions.

As the minister is aware, the Nunavut
Wildlife Management Board will be
meeting next to review a number of
submissions, including total allowable
harvest recommendations from the
Department of Environment.

For the record, can the minister confirm
his department's reasons for
recommending that the M'Clintock
Channel Total Allowable Harvest be
increased from 12 to 18 bears at a one-
to-one male to female sex harvest ratio?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.
Minister of Environment, Mr.
Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr.
Speaker. Yes, we have made
recommendations for that subpopulation
for the March meeting for the Nunavut
Wildlife Management Board and the
member is correct. Thank you, Mr.
Speaker.

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

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank
you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the
minister for being able to respond to that
question, although his response was
brief.

(interpretation ends) For the record, can
the minister confirm his department's
reason for recommending that the Gulf
of Boothia total allowable harvest
remains at 74 bears at a one-to-one male
to female harvest sex ratio?
(interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.
Minister of Environment, Mr.
Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr.
Speaker. I'll take a step back and explain
to Nunavummiut about the sex ratio. Mr.
Speaker, the sex ratio for polar bears for

all of Nunavut should be one female for every two males. In the recent past here, we changed that under lots of consultations with Nunavummiut for a one-to-one sex ratio and I know that all Nunavummiut and all hunters and trappers organizations were happy for that.

Mr. Speaker, for the Gulf of Boothia, the population estimate is still close to the same and the population estimates for that population is that it's staying stable and that's the reason for the total allowable harvest to remain the same. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the minister for that response. (interpretation ends) As the minister will recall, he made a statement at the Legislative Assembly's sitting of September 23, 2020 concerning polar bear co-management. Can the minister confirm if the hunters and trappers organizations in Kugaaruk and Taloyoak support his department's submission to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board concerning the total allowable harvest for the M'Clintock Channel and Gulf of Boothia polar bear subpopulations? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister of Environment, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once the polar bear population estimates were completed, my department went to all the affected

communities for the two subpopulations, both Gulf of Boothia and M'Clintock Channel, and consulted with the HTO members in those communities. After consultations were done, that's when the recommendations to the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board were made. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1217 – 5(2): Yukon Affordable Housing Initiative

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions today are for the minister responsible for the Nunavut Housing Corporation.

In my member's statement I had identified the Yukon's Affordable Housing Fund, which was created in 2017. Over the last three years, the fund has made contributions to 33 affordable housing projects, which has created over 350 new residential units. The fund, which contributes \$60,000 to \$90,000 a unit, would make more efficient use of government funds, which on average the Nunavut Housing Corporation pays \$650,000 a unit to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I do not mean to undermine the progress that the Nunavut Housing Corporation is making. The \$130 million a year in new construction of public housing units is significant. I just mean to underline that in other jurisdictions, the government's investments represent a less significant fraction of the total housing industry. I do recognize that, of course, Nunavut's circumstances are unique, but I believe that the Government of Nunavut and the

Nunavut Housing Corporation should play an active role in developing the housing industry.

Mr. Speaker, this is why I believe that a similar program would greatly assist in addressing Nunavut's housing shortage. Affordable housing would provide an alternative to public housing for high-income tenants and expand our extremely narrow housing continuum, not to mention assist and grow our non-profit sector and affordable housing projects.

For my first question for the minister: will the minister consider the possibility or benefits of creating a similar housing initiative fund to assist our own industry in creating new affordable housing projects? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for asking that question. It's very interesting to hear about what the Yukon government has been doing to help their communities. I'm sure it helps with the cost of housing, but as the member said, it's always more expensive to build things in Nunavut. Prices are entirely different here in Nunavut, especially for housing. The Nunavut Housing Corporation is always trying to work with Inuit organizations, government agencies, and the federal government to access more money to help us receive more consideration for Nunavut.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation has intentions to work with and meet with

the (interpretation ends) Northern Housing Pan-Territorial Group, (interpretation) and we will be brainstorming to see what plans we can develop to make for affordable housing.

Those are some of the plans that we have been making. It would be great if we could build houses the way the people of the Yukon are doing it, but the costs for doing so in Nunavut would be completely different. We are always trying to find alternative ways to make affordable housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thank the minister for the response. As I had previously indicated, the Nunavut Housing Corporation's cost per unit is continuing to rise, and I further pointed out that the private sector is quite often easily able to do business in a much more efficient manner, including construction costs.

Lastly, I pointed out that the Government of Nunavut, in partnership with the federal government, the investments made in expanding our public housing stock represents a significant ratio of the investments in the housing industry. I believe that this fund would be essential in assisting that, in growing the non-profit sector to help create more affordable housing projects, but I also believe that such an affordable housing fund would be an innovative method to partner with regional Inuit organizations, not just non-profits.

I would also like to ask if the minister would consider the possibility of making such an affordable housing fund available not just to non-profit organizations but also to the development of our regional Inuit organizations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The Nunavut Housing Corporation continues to work with all levels of government, Inuit and community organizations and industry, and there's no stop in doing that, but I also wanted to mention that we are trying to be very vocal with working with those organizations, but at this time we will continue to do that. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. I again remind members that there are many members who would like to ask questions, so please be mindful of that and try to keep your questions brief. Member Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Moving on to my last question, this year the Yukon Affordable Housing Fund is being utilized for targeted initiatives by providing additional consideration for seniors projects, projects aimed at homes for seniors specifically. I would like to ask the minister if the housing corporation would consider to create a stream of funding dedicated to the construction of elders facilities and retirement homes to assist our societies, our municipalities, and our Inuit organizations in the

development of elder-specific housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank you for that question. Yesterday we explained the elder homes that are under the Nunavut Housing Corporation. We're always making different considerations about those to see if we can get all of the communities to have elder homes. This work will not stop and it will continue and we will keep making other considerations for elder homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towntongie.

Question 1218 – 5(2): Public Housing Needs in Chesterfield Inlet

Ms. Towntongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I say "good day" to the residents of Chesterfield Inlet, who have an elder, Eli Kimmaliardjuk, whose granddaughter is Dr. Kimmaliardjuk. I wish you a wonderful day.

Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation, and they again concern the issue of housing needs in Chesterfield Inlet, as I noted in Wednesday's sitting of the Legislative Assembly.

All seven members of the Chesterfield Inlet Housing Association's board of directors signed a letter last June to the

president of the Nunavut Housing Corporation. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the hard work of:

- Lizzie Ippiak
- Leonie Mimialik
- Kelly Kadjuk
- Jeannie Tautu
- Valerie Ipkarnerk
- Lucy Issaluk
- Georgina Ipkarnerk

In their letter, the members of the board noted that there are almost two dozen units in the community that were built in the 1950s. That's almost 70 years ago that they have been up. I strongly believe that the Nunavut Housing Corporation needs to prioritize the replacement of units that are this old and in very bad condition. What actions will the Nunavut Housing Corporation take to address this issue of old houses? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank her for raising this issue again. My colleague previously raised this question regarding the correspondence sent on June 25 by the directors of the LHO, and she identified the names listed in the letter. The previous minister also responded in the fall, no, actually, an employee provided a response to the Chesterfield Inlet LHO about the status of the housing units.

In the letter, it is noted that this will be subject to a review, and furthermore, the

concerns expressed about this reinsertion of another inspection was noted in the letter, and yesterday, a further response was provided about the upcoming study and how the process will be planned out and what deliberations are possible in this scenario. It was explained in the other response yesterday sent to the LHO board. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Before we proceed, I would like to explain to members; it would be good if you would table that letter you are referring to. Your first supplementary, Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you. Yes, I will be tabling that letter.

(interpretation ends) I strongly believe that consideration should be given to increasing the Nunavut Housing Corporation's budget for repairs of existing housing stock in communities that are not receiving any new units. Chesterfield Inlet is one. Will the minister commit to considering this suggestion and reporting back to the House on her decision at the upcoming spring sitting? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. At this moment, the future details surrounding that particular issue are unknown, but the funding that the member referenced, and the plans that have already been made for this upcoming year will proceed. In regard to her question: yes, I can commit to

considering the suggestion. The manager of the housing association has responded, and has said that they are glad that this review is going to take place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've read the letter, but I'm asking for actual action and budget for maintenance of these units.

I do recognize that an independent review of the Nunavut Housing Corporation's construction allocation methodology is currently in progress, and I look forward to the report being tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

However, can the minister clarify how this review is taking into account the needs of our smallest communities, including Chesterfield Inlet? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I very much look forward to the (interpretation ends) independent review (interpretation) so that we can identify what improvements we need to make. Many communities have problems with old housing, and we will look into what solutions we may have and what we may be able to present. It's obvious that these will arise through the review and we will be able to make adjustments towards

renovation of old housing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1219 – 5(2): Arviat Recovery Plan

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to ask our Premier a question.

Mr. Speaker, earlier during my member's statement, I highlighted the restrictions in our community, such as not being allowed to socialize and that I don't know when those restrictions will end here in Arviat. Upon loosening up restrictions, I think the impacts we have faced will continue for months, perhaps. There are different expectations in my constituency of Arviat. I did comment on the differences, that there are expectations, and I think you should put that in writing.

(interpretation ends) My first question for the Premier is: will the Premier commit to considering the development of a recovery plan for the community of Arviat in light of the unprecedented hardship that the community is currently going through, and reporting back to the House on decisions regarding this recovery plan as soon as possible? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Premier of Nunavut. Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I know the community of Arviat is

experiencing difficulties, and are under very strict rules, and I feel for the community. Once the restrictions have loosened up, I will visit the community, and I want the residents of Arviat to know that I really want to visit the community. It is still not possible at this time due to COVID-19.

(interpretation ends) Mr. Speaker, the lockdown is long, it's hard and it's tiresome. I understand that and I feel for the Arviarmiut.

Mr. Speaker, as soon as Arviat starts opening up, and restrictions start being lifted, I know that all the departments will be in there to do any catching up, if need be. For example, motor vehicles, if there's any backlog, any health appointments that were non-essential that will be allowed, providing that the space is available on the other end, in Winnipeg, for any medical appointments.

Mr. Speaker, most of the services have been ongoing. I know with health, mental health, it's assessed every day. Anyone who needs any mental health help due to stress, and for sure there is stress, that the services are available there. I talk to all my ministers daily, and I've been assured that if there's any backlog of any services in Arviat, that they will be doing their best to get it caught up as soon as available.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to thank the Inuit orgs for all the support that they have given Arviarmiut. All the extra funds that have been going to Arviat are very helpful to all the retailers in Arviat; services and food, and items have been purchased by the extra money that's been going to Arviat. I know it's hard,

Arviarmiut, but we will get through this and COVID-19 will eventually go away in Arviat, and things will slowly get back to normal. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the Premier. I think in his response, the Premier maybe underlined some of the factors that make it necessary to have a recovery plan for this community because it sounds like there are needs within all these different departments and agencies, and to my knowledge there is no comprehensive recovery plan for the community.

This is a situation that I don't think any community in Nunavut has ever gone through. It's unprecedented and I'm concerned for my constituents that these negative effects will linger. Without a coordinated approach, I feel that the negative effects could linger longer than necessary.

I mentioned in my member's statement, the list, and I do appreciate that government departments are doing their best to continue delivering services, I do appreciate that, but I do feel that the community would be better served with the development of a recovery plan, and all I am asking from the Premier at this point is to consider, to consider; speak with your cabinet colleagues, consider the development of a recovery plan for the community of Arviat.

This is a question that I'll ask again: will the Premier consider developing a plan like this? (interpretation) Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I stated earlier, all of the departments will be trying to do their best to take up any backlog that's in Arviat. I know Arviarmiut, they are strong, they are resilient, and they will bounce right back. We will help them bounce back.

We can consider it, but there are many other things to consider like, Arviat, when it gets COVID-free, if another community hits where the services come from, all that will be considered, but I know Arviarmiut. They are tired, but they are resilient, they are strong and they will bounce back. We will help them bounce back. We will do our best to make sure the recovery plan is as swift and as quick and as effective as it can be. A lot of the recovery it needs to do will probably have to do with Health, and we will work on that as long as the health services that are needed on the other end in Winnipeg or elsewhere, can be accessed.

This COVID has affected everybody, not just Nunavut, not just Canada; everywhere. We don't have a playbook for COVID. We are adapting and learning as we go and I can assure the member, as I am from Arviat too, and I am an MLA for Arviat, that the government will do its best to make sure that Arviat has a smooth, fast recovery once it is deemed COVID-free. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you to the Premier. I do believe that the Premier did commit to considering that. (interpretation) I thank you very much for this, Premier, for being willing to consider it.

(interpretation ends) My last question is regarding who could contribute to the recovery in Arviat, and to be honest, I don't really care where the agencies to help come from. They could come from contributing to the recovery; they could come from inside Nunavut, they could come from outside Nunavut. I think the most important thing is that the support and the services are provided to assist the recovery.

My last question for the Premier is: should the government decide to develop a recovery plan for the community of Arviat, will the Premier commit to considering all available resources in and outside of the territory as part of this plan, including agencies such as the Canadian Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders? (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you, Premier of Nunavut, Mr. Savikataaq.

Hon. Joe Savikataaq: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I respond to that question, first, I would like to thank the Hamlet of Arviat for going above and beyond what they have to do.

>> *Applause*

Mr. Speaker, the hamlet has been so helpful and they have worked so hard for the people of Arviat there. I know the people of Arviat appreciate what the

hamlet's doing. They've gone up and beyond what their responsibilities are, and I would like to thank them for that.

Mr. Speaker, most of the organizations the member has mentioned, like Doctors Without Borders and Red Cross, I think the majority of the time, they are needed when there is a pandemic, when there's an emergency crisis going on. We did get some assistance from Red Cross earlier in Arviat. The Red Cross was there for a while.

Mr. Speaker, we will help Arviarmiut recover as I said. Maybe we can do with our own resources. If we need any other resources, then the appropriate the departments, or the CPHO, or whoever else can ask for assistance from outside of the territory.

Mr. Speaker, we will get to that bridge when we need to cross it, and I can assure Arviarmiut that we are going to help them in the recovery phase once Arviat is deemed COVID-free and stays COVID-free. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1220 – 5(2): Net Metering Program

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, Nunavummiut. I have a question for the Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, regarding something that was said in her minister's statement. I will read this in English.

(interpretation ends) I should also take a moment to remind all Nunavummiut that

if they wish to install renewable systems at home, the Qulliq Energy Corporation is still accepting applications for the corporation's net metering program, and I encourage them to apply.

(interpretation) It also states on the website that people can apply. However, many individuals in the smaller communities do not have computers. What is the process if these people want to apply for this program, Mr. Speaker? Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Ms. Ehaloak.

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) I thank the member for his question. I'm very excited about this net metering program. If individuals don't have computers, there is a number that they can call to contact the Qulliq Energy Corporation, or they can go to the Qulliq Energy Corporation office if they would like.

I've had community members in my community come to my MLA office, my Member of the Legislative Assembly office, and use my computer so that they can download the application and review any information they would like to see on the Qulliq Energy Corporation website. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) Thank you to the minister for her response. My question is: what is the cost of this program, and does the homeowner have

to come up with some of his or her money to offset the cost? Could the minister elaborate a bit on that? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Ms. Ehaloak.

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) The cost of the net metering program is, the individual resident of the home who wants to install the net metering program in their home, is at their cost. I have been approached by various constituents who say they want to be a part of the net metering program, but they don't have the funds. The Qulliq Energy Corporation is currently looking at ways to try and help these individuals get funding to have the net metering program installed in their homes. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Netser: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) Can the minister explain how much this would cost? Based on her prior response, can she provide a ballpark figure of how much of the expenses would be paid by the homeowner, and if the homeowner were to request this net metering program, who would provide the technical assistance to the homeowner? Who is providing assistance for this (interpretation ends) net metering program (interpretation) to connect to their units? Who will install these connections to the private home? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Minister responsible for the Qulliq Energy Corporation, Ms. Ehaloak.

Hon. Jeannie Ehaloak (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) To install the net metering program, I had stated earlier that it depends on the owner itself. There are companies that, because of the net metering program that was introduced through this government, there are companies now within Nunavut who have started a business to install this type of the net metering program itself.

The approximate cost to install a net metering program is approximately \$30,000 to \$40,000, but I've been informed that through the Department of Environment, there is a process that individuals can apply for funding for support. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Question 1221 – 5(2): Policy on School Closures during Community Funerals

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your skills as a Speaker continue to improve.

>>*Laughter*

To my fellow residents, I wish you all a good morning. Now, we are receiving reminders to keep our comments short, and to not continually repeat the question or topic. I am proud to hear these rules and I take pride in your judgment.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Education regarding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to it arriving in our territory, I imagine policies already existed, perhaps that are not applicable today, obviously. When someone loses a beloved family member, when a funeral procession is required, most schools are usually closed for the event.

This practice is common amongst most communities when a family loses a loved one and a funeral will be held, so I would imagine a policy exists, does it? Do DEAs have a common policy that is used to close schools in the event of a funeral, or would the closure only be applicable to the immediate family members? Is this for all community members or just the family? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also thank the Member for Tununig for his question. Mr. Speaker, the DEAs in the communities have a generic guideline in this area, and perhaps the onus is more on each community since each community has different practices, and are all unique in their population sizes, with some smaller and others larger.

However, in Nunavut, when someone passes away and there is going to be a funeral, some schools stay open. It is up to the individual to decide if they want to attend a funeral or if they want to attend classes because the school is open. It can go either way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for the response to my question. The old education Act is no longer in effect, and the new *Education Act* is. Does it address this issue? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. David Joanasie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The *Education Act* outlines that the calendar school year consists of 165 days within the year. Using that figure as a guide, decisions can be made as to when the school should be open or when they can plan for closures. However, weather can be a factor, and that is also considered when deciding if the schools need to be closed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Oral Questions. I have no more names on my list. Let us proceed. Written Questions. Returns to Written Questions. Replies to Opening Address. Petitions. Responses to Petitions. (interpretation ends) Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. (interpretation) Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

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

**Committee Report 034 – 5(2): Bill 62,
An Act to Amend the Judicature
Act**

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation ends) This is a joke; it's Friday, because I've been speaking during the absence of our Chair, John Main. This stupid song keeps going through my mind, *Moving on Up*.

>>Laughter

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to report that Bill 62, *An Act to Amend the Judicature Act*, has been reviewed by the Standing Committee on Legislation and that the bill is ready for consideration in Committee of the Whole. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. Bill 62 can be placed on the order paper for March 8.

(interpretation ends) Reports of Standing and Special Committees on Bills and Other Matters. (interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. (interpretation) Member for Rankin Inlet North-Chesterfield Inlet, Ms. Towtongie.

Item 13: Tabling of Documents

**Tabled Document 362 – 5(2):
Correspondence from Chesterfield
Inlet Housing Association**

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (interpretation) I would like to table this letter that has been written by the Chesterfield Inlet Housing Association, and I want the members to read it carefully as it concerns older

housing units, and the struggles that the local housing organization is constantly facing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Tabling of Documents. (interpretation) Continuing on. (interpretation ends) Notices of Motions. Notices of Motions for First Reading of Bills. Motions. First Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Item 17: First Reading of Bills

**Bill 68 – An Act to Amend the
Revolving Funds Act, No. 2 – First
Reading**

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 68, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, No. 2*, be now read for the first time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

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

(interpretation ends) First Reading of Bills. Second Reading of Bills. Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Item 18: Second Reading of Bills

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I seek consent to allow for Bill 68, *An Act to Amend the Revolving*

Funds Act, No. 2, be read today for the second reading. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) The minister is seeking consent for Bill 68 to be read for the second time today. Are there any nays? (interpretation) There are no nays. (interpretation ends) Please proceed, Mr. Hickes.

Bill 68 – An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, No. 2 – Second Reading

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you, members. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 68, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, No., 2*, be read for the second time.

Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the *Revolving Funds Act* to increase the limit on the debit or credit balance of the Petroleum Products Stabilization Fund. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried. Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Motion 109 – 5(2): Move Bill 68 to Committee of the Whole

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In accordance with Rule 67(2), I move, seconded by the Hon. Member

for Arviat South, that Bill 68, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, No. 2*, be ordered directly into the Committee of the Whole for consideration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

An Hon. Member: Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried. Bill 68 is ordered into the Committee of the Whole.

Second Reading of Bills. (interpretation) Continuing on. (interpretation ends) Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters. Bill 58, 59, 60, 61, and 68 with Ms. Angnakak in the Chair.

In accordance to the authority provided to me by Motion 107 – 5(2), the committee will stay in session until it reports itself out.

Before we proceed with the Committee of the Whole, we will take a 15-minute break.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House recessed at 10:49 and Committee resumed at 11:10*

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

Chairperson (Ms. Angnakak): Hello, everybody. Welcome back from our break. I'll call the meeting to order. In Committee of the Whole we have the following items to deal with: Bills 58,

59, 60, 61, and 68. What is the wish of the committee? Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The wish of the committee today is very ambitious. Madam Chairperson, we wish to commence with the clause-by-clause review of Bill 68, and then we will commence the review of the 2021-22 Main Estimates for the Nunavut Housing Corporation, followed by the Department of Family Services, Justice, Finance, and Economic Development and Transportation. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

>>Laughter

>>Applause

Chairperson: We will indeed be busy, Mr. Rumbolt. Are we in agreement that we first deal with Bill 68?

Some Members: Agreed.

**Bill 68 – An Act to Amend the
Revolving Funds Act, No. 2 –
Consideration in Committee**

Chairperson: Alright. I would like to then ask Minister Hickes: do you have any officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, I do. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. I see your officials are already in, so Sergeant-at-Arms can stay at ease for now.

>>Laughter

For the record, Minister Hickes, please introduce your officials and then you can proceed with your opening comments. Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. As I am sure he is no stranger to the House, Dan Carlson, Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department of Finance, and Nathaniel Hutchinson with the Petroleum Products Division, and my apologies, Madam Chairman, I forget his title. It is Friday.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson and members. I appear before you today to present Bill 68, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, No. 2*.

Through this bill we are seeking to increase the Petroleum Products Stabilization Fund's upper and lower limits to +/- \$20 million from the current level of +/- \$10 million.

I would like to briefly explain how the fund works and why we need to change it through Bill 68.

Our government buys, imports, distributes, and sells fuel across the territory. We set the price of fuel based largely on what it costs the Petroleum Products Division to operate, which in turn is based largely on what it costs them to buy fuel in the first place.

Madam Chairperson, they estimate how much fuel Nunavummiut will consume in a year, estimate the cost of operations, and recommend a price to charge.

When we buy fuel at low prices, we sell it to Nunavummiut at low prices. When our cost of fuel goes up, we charge Nunavummiut more at the pump.

The volume of fuel Nunavummiut and their businesses buy from the Petroleum Products Division in a year also fluctuates and impacts overall revenues.

The stabilization fund acknowledges these outside factors and allows us to react. Like its name says, the stabilization fund helps us keep prices more stable for the benefit of Nunavummiut.

When fuel prices rise, the government can absorb these high costs and run a deficit by keeping prices in Nunavut low. When global prices drop, we can build our account back up by running a surplus.

This fund also helps with changes to consumption. If the amount of fuel we sell increases or drops significantly, the stabilization fund can help reduce the per litre price impact at the pump.

The stabilization fund has upper and lower limits. These limits are currently +/- \$10 million. We are here today to increase the upper and lower limits to +/- \$20 million.

Madam Chairman and members, over the longer term this will better allow the government to continue to stabilize prices. In the immediate term, and the reason we are here today, widening the buffer means not having to increase prices for Nunavummiut or subsidizing the fund now.

Specifically the PPD expects to run a \$13.5 million deficit in 2020-21. As they were already starting with a negative balance of \$5.1 million, they are projecting a year-end balance of -\$18.6 million, below the allowable lower limit.

Madam Chairman and members, consumption was far lower than they initially predicted this year. Given lower-than-expected fuel sales and with the benefit of hindsight, the price of fuel was too low; Nunavummiut should have been paying a few cents more per litre all along.

Mr. Speaker, we recognized this likely deficit in the fall and considered then whether to raise the price. At the time, however, our territory was in the middle of our first COVID outbreak. Nunavummiut had enough to deal with without having to also manage a fuel price increase.

My colleagues and I felt that raising the price of fuel during the outbreak and just ahead of the colder winter months was not in the best interests of Nunavummiut, even if it was in the best interests of this fund.

So here we are today. I am asking members to pass Bill 68 so the Petroleum Products Division can legally end the year in a deficit position and, importantly, recover it gradually over time from fuel consumers. Thank you, Madam Chairperson and members.

Chairperson: Thank you, Minister Hickes. Do members have any comments? Any general comments? Do members have any questions? Oh, Mr. Main. Sorry, Mr. Main. Mr. Main, over to you.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) I do have a few general comments.

I really like this piece of legislation. I appreciate the department's work in

bringing it forward and I appreciate the fact that the department is responding to requests from the Standing Committee on Legislation. I think that standing committees have an important role to play in proper management of the government operations and resources, and I really appreciate the department's responsiveness to requests and through communications with the standing committee.

I won't have a ton of questions on this bill; it's fairly simple. I think the minister has laid out the situation fairly clearly, and I look forward to seeing the increased stabilization limits implemented so as to avoid negative impacts on Nunavummiut through increased fuel prices. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Speaker...I mean, Madam Chairperson. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well, Mr. Main. Any questions? Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I'm really appreciative of the minister and his team to come up with this bill, specifically to protect Nunavummiut from having to deal with a fuel price increase in such a short time. Thank you, minister.

My question is just a small question: does the fuel include jets or airplanes? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, it includes all fuel classes. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Are you done? Okay. Who? Mr. Netser.

Mr. Netser (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Speaker. (interpretation ends) I've just got one question and that relates to the carbon tax increases that the federal government has been talking about lately and I just wondered: how much per litre is the government looking at in terms of the carbon tax that the federal government has been talking about? That's just my quick question. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Minister Hickey.

Hon. George Hickey: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. That calculation goes into when we base our estimates on the carbon tax.

Just for the level of clarity for the committee, if Mr. Carlson would be able to respond to that question, I'll let the accountants deal with that one, Madam Chairperson. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Mr. Carlson.

Mr. Carlson: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The federal carbon tax will increase by about 2.5 cents a litre on April 1 and that increase is a tax increase from the Government of Canada; it doesn't relate to PPD pricing decisions internally. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Are you done? Okay. I have no more names on my list. (interpretation ends) Can everybody go to Bill 68 in your legislation binder? Oh, sorry, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main: I'm sorry, Madam Chairperson. I do have, I think, two questions on this, if you will allow.

Chairperson: Go ahead, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main: Okay. (interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) Just very briefly, it's my understanding that there has been a decrease in consumption in the current fiscal year of certain petroleum products. I wonder if the minister could summarize which products have seen a decrease in consumption this current fiscal year, compared to a normal year. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. With that question, I'm very happy that I brought Mr. Hutchinson here today. Through you, Madam Chairperson, if Mr. Hutchinson could respond to the member's question.

Chairperson: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. Hutchinson: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I thank the member for the question. All fuel products have held fairly consistent. The one that has seen the big hit is jet A1 and that is a higher margin product for us, so that certainly hits our bottom line. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Mr. Main, anymore questions?

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) I just wanted to follow up on this.

Jet consumption of that product has not been normal and I'm trying to think about how that's going to affect the stabilization fund in the coming fiscal year because travel patterns are not back to normal. The pandemic is still affecting travel across Canada, including Nunavut. People are not as mobile as they normally are and are not flying around as much.

I guess the question is: how will this year's decreased consumption play into the upcoming fiscal year's forecasting as it pertains to the stabilization fund and the operations of PPD; Petroleum Products Division? Does it mean that you will be purchasing less jet fuel? It's my understanding that some of the jet products have a shelf life on them. Anyway, that's technical, but I'm just trying to understand whether we will need less of those aviation products in the fiscal year which starts in about three weeks' time. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. (interpretation ends) Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Mr. Hutchinson did nod to me that there would be likely a less amount of jet fuel purchased this year. To deal with the pricing question that the member asked, the member is correct; the estimates were very challenging this year due to COVID. It's something that's going to have to be more closely monitored, and one of the options as those forecasts come to a realization as we see the habits and buying habits, there might be more in-year price adjustments this year than most years as we'll have to adjust to

market sales and conditions. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Mr. Main, any more questions? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) I think this is my last question, but you never know. The pricing mechanism on fuel that the minister mentioned in his comments, avoiding a price hike on Nunavummiut as part of the reason for bringing this bill forward, and I do appreciate that.

Are there any limits on how much of a price increase can be levied on different types of product? I don't understand the pricing mechanism, and it is very complex, but we do have the experts here, or you have the experts there. Is there a limit on how much of a price increase can be put in place at any given time or is it just simply tied to the stabilization fund and the needs to keep that within its limits? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

(interpretation ends) I hope that the question is clear. If not, I can clarify myself. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I thought for a moment, the way the member was describing it, that he had a fuel expert with him. Madam Chairman, I did bring my fuel expert with me, so I think it would be best if he responded to the member's question. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. Hutchinson: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thanks for the question. There's no mandated limit that would restrict us from recovering our cost of product. In the past prices in Nunavut, going back five, six, or seven years, when oil prices were quite a bit higher than they are today, prices were considerably higher than they are now. We are legislatively mandated to break even.

In saying that, just looking forward, we did achieve some savings this year in our early purchase program to be realized in the upcoming fiscal year, so that will help our position going forward. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. (interpretation ends) Mr. Main, one last question? (interpretation) Are you done? (interpretation ends) Okay. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Good morning. Starting off with the minister's opening comments on page 2, towards the middle of the page there, the minister indicates that the PPD expects to run a \$13 million deficit in the current year. He also indicated that the PPD had started with a negative balance of \$5 million entering the current year, which now places the Petroleum Products Division Revolving Fund at a negative balance of \$18 million.

That is an interesting bit of information. I think this is the first time ever that the PPD entering the current year at a deficit has ever been made public and the fact that the PPD has entered the current year

with a \$5 million deficit. Is it correct that this has never been made public before? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It has been made public every year. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I find that quite interesting because I don't think that information was even shared with the standing committee. As the PPD does not disclose its financial statements, I was curious where exactly the minister is indicating that this information is made public. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Oh, sorry, Madam Chairperson. I didn't hear you switching over to me.

For the most recent one on page 65 of our public accounts and section 17, the Petroleum Products Stabilization Fund, it shows a net deficit of \$5,107,000.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Hickes. Mr. Lightstone, just a reminder that we are here about the increase of the bill. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Moving on to a comment that was previously made, I believe, by Mr. Hutchinson regarding the *Petroleum Products Revolving Fund Act* itself

stating that it's legislatively required to operate on a break-even basis. My next question is: given that the fund had entered the current year in a deficit position, how often has the Government of Nunavut and the Petroleum Products Division been non-compliant with this segment of the legislation? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. When we talk about working to operate at a zero balance or at least as close as possible to it, when we go through our financial closing at the end of the year, as an example, the \$5,107,000 that occurred last year, would necessitate us to do a late-in-the-year change to fuel pricing.

With the recognition through the great work of Mr. Hutchinson and his team in pre-purchasing, we knew that we were going to have lower fuel cost expenses on the purchasing side of things. It was felt very comfortable that having a fairly small deficit when you're talking over \$200 million and a \$5 million deficit out of that in purchasing, it would be able to be adjusted in the next fuel pricing structure.

To work at end of year to bring that fund to balance every year would put us in the exact same situation that we are trying to avoid right now of having a sharp increase or decrease at the year-end when we are balancing things. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Moving on to the next

topic; in one of the minister's previous responses it was: the current deficit position is largely due to the sales of jet A-1 fuel. I am curious: how much of this deficit position is actually due to this specific fuel type, and more specifically, how much was the projected sales of this product compared to the actual? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I am not sure if Mr. Hutchinson has that level of detail with him, but if he does, Madam Chairperson, through you, if he could respond.

Chairperson: Mr. Hutchinson.

Mr. Hutchinson: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Unfortunately I do not have that level of detail. Jet sales, again, they played a contributing factor. When we began the fiscal year, we had done our projections back in December 2019 for the upcoming fiscal year. We ended up... . Sorry, Madam Chairperson. Let me take a minute and get my thoughts, if you don't mind.

Sorry about the delay. Yes, so we had projected initially a loss of \$2 million for the upcoming fiscal year and part of that related to our model that we were using. Ransomware caused us to lose our old model, so we had created a new one. Some of the issues were around the way the carbon tax was calculating in that model, so in the old year we incurred a higher deficit than we had intended and that is transferred over to this year, so that price decrease that we had done in January by 4 cents a litre for gas and diesel has contributed to some of the

issues now. If we had not made that reduction, we would not be incurring such a large deficit in this year. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you. I just want to remind members that this Bill 68 is only to increase the stabilization fund. Let us try and keep to that. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I will keep my question to the stabilization fund and the necessity of it, and specifically the deficits that caused this necessity.

My next question is a matter that is currently unclear in relation to the fuel price setting and the impacts that has on the stabilization fund. How much political involvement is there in the fuel price setting? For example, when the Petroleum Products Division makes a recommendation to the minister or the cabinet on the fuel prices themselves, is there any wiggle room or is it set in stone, the recommendations made by the Petroleum Products Division? That is my final question. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Okay, Mr. Lightstone. Minister Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Just to be clear, I have made sure that within our internal discussions with myself and my team, I was looking at bringing forward this increase to the stabilization fund anyway. As our fuel purchase amounts keep increasing over the years, to actually be able to stabilize prices, we needed a little bit bigger of a threshold.

Just to give the member the level of detail that he's looking at, I would ask Mr. Carlson to respond through you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Carlson.

Mr. Carlson: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for the question. In terms of how these prices are set, I just want to give folks a sense of how it comes through the Department of Finance. Nate and his team at the PPD put together a request and they bring it forward to us. At that point my team looks at it. We look at the assumptions. We look at the rationale. We make sure the numbers make sense to us. In this case we act as an...I don't want to say outside, but as an objective challenge function. We ask Nate and his team to prove to us why what he is bringing forward makes sense. There are a bunch of questions back and forth, and this is part of the work that we do. When we think that the analysis is ready for ministers' consideration, we bring it to them through the Financial Management Board.

The specific question was on political involvement. The Financial Management Board sets all fees and prices in the government, that's one of the things that they do, so they are involved from decision-making. Of the several years that I have been involved with this, the decision in November was the first time that I am aware that a minister said, "Wait a minute, there's more going on now than this specific price increase." In this case the ministers made a decision, but it's the first time I have seen that happen. Mostly this is an operational issue and it's a numbers thing, not a

political one. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Mr. Qamaniq is next.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I have just the one question on this topic. Now, last year in March when the COVID-19 restrictions came into play, many activities such as sports hunting, where outfitters hosted polar bear sports hunts, as well as tourism operators who basically operate only in the springtime and summer all had to stop operations, and to date not many hunts or tours have taken place. Actually all travel has been stopped, so I wonder how much of an impact it has had on fuels that this sector usually purchases for use. Has the volume of sales of naphtha also caused a deficit in the petroleum products or not? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Minister Hickers.

Hon. George Hickers: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Across a number of different fuel classes were impacted by the forecast and challenges brought upon by COVID. Mr. Hutchinson did mention that the jet fuel was one of the higher ones, but across the board, there would have been some implications from the COVID forecasting. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Are you done? (interpretation ends) Okay. I think everybody asked the questions who wanted to ask the questions, so we will go to Bill 68 in your legislation binder. Bill 68, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, No. 2*. Clause 1. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Do members agree to Bill 68 as a whole?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Do members agree to put Bill 68 on the orders of the day for third reading?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Closing comments, Mr. Hickes.

Hon. George Hickes: Just very briefly, Madam Chairperson, I appreciate the members' support on this to bring us into compliance so we didn't have to make any drastic adjustments to fuel pricing.

I do look forward to the debate on Bill 52 and Bill 54 on the Petroleum Products Division and obviously the revolving fund bill, and I look forward to those healthy debates. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

>> *Applause*

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. (interpretation ends) Thank you. This concludes this meeting over Bill 68. I think we will break for lunch and see everybody back here at 1:30. Thank you.

>> *Committee recessed at 11:39 and resumed at 13:29*

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

Chairperson: Good afternoon. Welcome back. I would now like to ask Minister Nakashuk: do you have officials that you would like to appear before the committee? Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Good afternoon. Yes, I do.

Chairperson: Thank you. Does the committee agree to let officials appear before you?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: They're already in there. Thank you. For the record, Minister Nakashuk, please introduce your officials and proceed with your opening comments. Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Accompanying me this afternoon are Terry Audla, President of the Housing Corporation, (interpretation ends) President and CEO; Mike McPherson, Vice-president and COO; Ji Liu, Vice-president and (interpretation) Chief Financial Officer; Eric Doiron, Director of Policy.

(interpretation) Thank you. Thank you, members and Chairperson of the Legislative Assembly. I am here today to present the 2021-22 Main Estimates of the Nunavut Housing Corporation. The main estimates for the corporation reflect the following spending increases:

The Nunavut Housing Corporation has an estimated 5,869 public housing units and an additional 1,741 staff housing units. The housing corporation is requesting \$219,125,000 from the

Government of Nunavut for the operations and maintenance in fiscal year 2021-22.

Public housing expenditures will rise by \$2,549,000. As the housing corporation's public housing portfolio increases and so do the costs of maintaining units. The budget increase will cover increased costs of maintenance and administration, utilities, property taxes and leases.

Headquarters and directorate will see an increase of \$1,500,000 in expenditures due to the overall increases in utility costs of corporation-owned office buildings and IT hardware and software upgrades. This increase will also be used for the ongoing costs associated with the recurring oil spills throughout the Nunavut communities. Of the increasing expenditure, \$422,000 was approved for fiscal year 2021-22 and the remaining amount will be reflected in the 2022-23 fiscal year budget.

The housing corporation will also see an increase required in the amount of \$755,000 to compensate for the net reduction in funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Staff housing expenditures will rise by \$3,225,000. As the corporation's staff housing portfolio increases, so do the costs of maintaining our units. A total of \$93,000 was approved in our budget for fiscal year 2021-22 and the remaining amount will be reflected in the 2022-23 fiscal year budget.

(interpretation ends) With the increase of expenditures due to increased housing stocks, the corporation will see an increase in public housing annual rent

assessment from \$17,040,000 to \$19,710,000. This will be used to offset the increasing costs in fiscal year 2021-22. The Government of Nunavut's funding for the Nunavut Housing Corporation for fiscal year 2021-22 were increased by \$1,407,000.

Ms. Chairperson, my officials and I will continue to implement the government's mandate and respond to the needs of Nunavummiut for safe and affordable housing, including supports for elders. Much of this work will be carried out through the *Blueprint for Action on Housing*, which was reaffirmed by this government. In fiscal 2021-22 it will be important for the corporation and all departments to work together to ensure that the momentum of the *Blueprint for Action on Housing* continues as part of the implementation of *Turaaqtavut*. The corporation will focus on establishing and sustaining strategic partnerships to meet the needs of our communities, including working with Nunavut Tunngavik and regional Inuit organizations.

As you are aware, the corporation is conducting independent reviews of the public housing rent scale and the construction allocation methodology. These reviews are currently underway and I look forward to sharing the results with you before the end of this government.

Inuit employment is a priority for the Nunavut Housing Corporation and local housing organizations account for a significant portion of the corporation's operating budget and are included in the development of its Inuit employment plan. We will work to provide opportunities for recruitment, training,

and advancement of Inuit. The corporation continues to support cross-training, internships, career broadening, and mentoring and heavily promotes its online training platform. To this end, supervisory level training and development is ongoing. Our goal is to establish a continuum of Inuit employment.

Ms. Chairperson and committee members, thank you for this opportunity. I look forward to a meaningful discussion. My officials and I are ready to answer any questions you may have regarding the Nunavut Housing Corporation's 2021-22 main estimates and business plan. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well, Minister Nakashuk. (interpretation ends) Does the chair of the standing committee have any comments? Mr. Rumbolt.

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Madam Chairperson, and good afternoon. I am pleased to provide opening comments on behalf of the Standing Committee on Community and Economic Development on its review of the proposed 2021-22 Main Estimates and 2021-24 Business Plan of the Nunavut Housing Corporation. The Nunavut Housing Corporation's proposed 2021-22 main estimates are \$219,125,000. This represents a 0.6 percent increase from the 2020-21 fiscal year. The number of positions in the corporation remains unchanged at 123.0.

Members raised a number of issues and concerns during the minister's recent appearance before the standing committee. The Nunavut Housing

Corporation's 2019-2020 annual report under the *Nunavut Housing Corporation Act* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 5, 2020. The Nunavut Housing Corporation's 2016-17 annual report on contracting, procurement and leasing activities was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 8, 2018. The 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-2020 annual reports have not yet been tabled.

On October 20, 2016 the *Blueprint for Action on Housing - Implementation Plan for the Government of Nunavut Long-Term Comprehensive Housing and Homelessness Strategy* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly. This document contains 60 specific action items that are intended to address an extremely broad range of housing issues. The standing committee continues to recognize that it is not practicable for the Nunavut Housing Corporation to simultaneously implement all of the blueprint's action items, and continues to encourage the corporation to prioritize its work in a clear and focused manner.

The *Status of Housing Report 2020* was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on September 29, 2020. The Nunavut Housing Corporation's draft 2021-24 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2022-23 fiscal year is to "Continue to carry out monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Blueprint for Action on Housing and develop the bi-annual Status of Housing Report."

The Nunavut Housing Corporation's draft 2021-24 business plan indicates that "the Canada Housing Benefit, which represents \$9.0 million over nine years for Nunavut, has been targeted by the

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for rent affordability. The Canada Housing Benefit will be used to provide temporarily relief in crisis situations that result from the gaps in the Nunavut housing continuum, in particular the lack of transitional housing. The Nunavut Housing Corporation continues to work with the Department of Family Services to co-develop a Canada Housing Benefit Program and Action Plan appropriate for Nunavut, in consultation with the Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation.” During the 2020 ministerial appearance, the standing committee was informed that the Nunavut Housing Corporation had been working with the Department of Family Services in the development of the new Canada Housing Benefit. However, it is not clear what progress has been achieved to date.

On January 24, 2013 the Government of Nunavut announced changes to the public housing rent scale. These changes came into effect on February 1, 2014. A key goal of reforming the public housing rent scale has been to remove disincentives to employment. However, the extent to which the new rent scale has achieved this goal remains unclear.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation’s 2018-19 annual report, which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 7, 2019, indicated that “only 3% of [public housing tenants] earn over \$100,000 per year.” However, the corporation’s 2019-2020 annual report contained less information regarding high-income public housing tenants. The standing committee notes that the *Blueprint for Action on Housing* indicates that one of its specific action

items is to “...review possible development of a fixed-rent subsidized housing model targeting high-income public housing tenants, particularly those currently paying maximum rent in public housing.”

On June 1, 2020 the Nunavut Housing Corporation issued a Request for Proposals for Public Housing Rent Scale Review. The request for proposals closed on June 29, 2020. On September 23, 2020, Minister’s Statement 445 – 5(2) was delivered in the Legislative Assembly. It indicated that the final report [from the review] “will be completed next spring and will hopefully be available by June 2021.” The standing committee look forward to reviewing the report with care.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation’s draft 2021-24 business plan indicates that it “continues to participate in the Government of Nunavut-Agnico Eagle Mines Memorandum of Understanding subcommittee on housing. The subcommittee has agreed to explore ways to assist employees in homeownership and identify opportunities to encourage new housing construction, such as public-private partnerships. The Nunavut Housing Corporation also continues to work with Baffinland Iron Mines Corporation on the development of the 2020 Inuit Employment Survey.” The standing committee looks forward to monitoring progress in these areas.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation’s draft 2021-24 business plan indicates that it “has a new Management Agreement in place with its community partners, the Local Housing Organizations, to deliver housing and

provide maintenance and administration services on housing units. New management agreements were signed as of June 2020 and help clarify and define the relationship between the Nunavut Housing Corporation and the Local Housing Organizations, ensuring that the Nunavut Housing Corporation's programs are delivered consistently across the territory." The standing committee urges the minister to table a copy of the new master management agreement in the Legislative Assembly.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation's draft 2021-24 business plan indicates that it "has met with the Qikiqtani Inuit Association on several occasions to discuss affordable housing for Inuit on Inuit-Owned Land. Further engagement will be necessary as a means to identify opportunities for potential collaboration." The standing committee looks forward to monitoring progress in this area.

The Nunavut Housing Corporation's 2019-2020 annual report, which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on November 5, 2020, indicates that there was a total of \$39,011,000 in public housing rent receivables as of March 31, 2020. The Nunavut Housing Corporation's draft 2021-24 business plan indicates that one of its priorities for the 2021-22 fiscal year is to "Continue to monitor and review impact of collections policy and procedures to reduce Local Housing Organization arrears and continue to develop and implement Local Housing Organization deficit recovery plans." The standing committee supports measures being taken to assist local housing organizations in these areas.

The Government of Nunavut's current Staff Housing Policy was approved in April 2019. It falls under the responsibility of the Department of Human Resources. The Nunavut Housing Corporation's draft 2021-24 business plan indicates that two of its priorities for the 2021-22 fiscal year are to "work with the Department of Human Resources to provide leasing opportunities that allow increase in government staff capacity and allow positions to be advertised with staff housing" and to "Continue to collaborate with the Department of Human Resources when monitoring staff housing vacancy rates of staff housing units and determine community options for housing development on a case-by-case basis."

Madam Chairperson, that concludes my opening comments on the proposed 2021-22 Main Estimates and 2021-24 Business Plan of the Nunavut Housing Corporation. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Rumbolt. I will now open up the floor for general comments. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Madam Chairperson. There was a letter written from Chesterfield Inlet on October 14, 2020 to the President of the Housing Corporation and there has been no response regarding the extremely old units, and if money can be set aside to renovate them. If possible, I would like to invite the minister and the President of the Nunavut Housing Corporation to go to Chesterfield Inlet and view those units. Thank you.

My question is: in the ministers opening comments, on page two about the rental of houses, the amounts were around \$17 million to \$19,000,710 in rent assessments. What does this mean? You were going to do an assessment of rent scales and since 2020-21, rents are becoming too expensive. When people start to work, the rent goes way up. So what does this mean? That in 2021-22, the funding for the Housing Corporation will increase by \$1.407 million? (interpretation ends) That is my final question, mam.

Chairperson: Thank you, Ms. Towtongie. We were just going to do general comments, but I think I'll allow questions on the opening comments as well, just to be consistent. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I also thank you for asking the question about the older housing units. We are not quite sure how the review is going to work yet, but the process is under review. While it is under review I cannot say exactly how it's going to be done. Rent scales are always a concern, and we are well aware of that. Once the (interpretation ends) rent scale report (interpretation) has been completed, then we can understand more as to what we can do about the rent scale situation.

Another concerning issue is that if you look at all of Nunavut, the proportion of people who make less than \$27,000 a year is about 60 percent and they pay \$60 a month in rent. We want to see if that causes the housing corporation to pay more money. After the new scale review report is out we'll be looking at

that some more. I hope I answered the question properly. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. (interpretation ends) Apparently, I broke protocol, so we'll just keep to general comments. Anybody have only general comments on the opening? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) I just have a few brief comments. First of all, welcome to the minister, her first appearance as housing minister in front of the committee. (interpretation) Welcome.

Private homeownership is something that I am concerned about for Nunavut. I believe the numbers are dropping. The numbers of people who own private houses are dropping. I would really like to get the people who are interested in getting their own homes to get assistance, especially young people who want to build their own house or they're going to purchase a new house for their own use for many years to come.

My constituents, thinking about Whale Cove and Arviat, people who own private homes are not increasing in number and that is very worrisome. Makes me want to ask questions as to why this is happening. I encourage the Nunavut Housing Corporation in their efforts to make this better.

The mining companies, like Agnico Eagle, I know you're working with them. I urge them to keep doing that because my constituents who work at the mine want to build and own their own homes as well. It would be good if that

partnership would continue, or if there would be a partnership, that would help.

(interpretation ends) Madam Chairperson, the second area I wanted to mention was the urgent need for transitional housing, especially, it's been made very clear to me with the COVID-19 outbreaks across Nunavut, how big that need is and how much housing affects people's health, as well, the recent report under Family Services that looked at a number of communities, including Arviat and the hidden homelessness and overcrowding problems that they're facing. I know this is something that the housing corporation is working on and I would like to encourage them to continue.

Finally, the last area I wanted to mention was the importance of using more of our local labour, whether it's for maintenance and renovation, M&I type work, or whether it's during construction of new units. I think the situation that we are in right now where we have tons of unemployed people, yet we are still importing, in my opinion far too many workers from other parts of Canada, I think it's a situation we need to get out of.

Again, COVID-19 has highlighted how, I don't want to use a bad word, but how expensive this problem is for the housing corporation because we are now paying for housing workers, housing trades-related workers to stay in isolation for two weeks, which I believe costs the government well over \$10,000 per trip. I think that has underlined why we need to get away from relying so much on outside labour. I know that's something the housing corporation has been working on and I hope to see us make

progress. (interpretation) I am done. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairman (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Qirngnuq, you are next.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Minister, welcome, and your officials. It's good to see you all here.

In the opening comments, it mentioned the \$219 million. That is a lot of money, and you mentioned that expenditures will increase by \$2.5 million, and there is the \$3,225,000 figure as well. Looking at those figures, if you add them together, that's a lot of money.

Madam Chairperson, what was just said about the old rental arrears that need to be paid off; have there been any thoughts about those to find a way to get them resolved? The Nunavut Housing Corporation will have to find a way to make that better. Considering the older units and whenever they get renovated, they get more expensive to rent. I believe the older units should have been paid off by now because rent has been paid to them for so many years, and mould has been remediated as well. I believe that as they get cheaper to maintain, then more consideration should be made to make them cheaper.

I believe more thought should be put into this matter in terms of rental costs, and also try to make rent payments more standardized. Fewer people would be going into debt if the housing corporation did that. There should also be consideration given to what my colleague said about homeownership, to make plans for it. That's what I'm thinking, Madam Chairperson, and that's

why I'm saying it. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. I have no more names on my list. (interpretation ends) We'll go to O-IV-2. Headquarters. Nunavut Housing Corporation. \$8,977,000. (interpretation) Are there any questions? (interpretation ends) Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Under Headquarters and the Policy Branch of the Nunavut Housing Corporation, I would like to follow up with my questions that I posed to the minister this morning with regard to Yukon's Affordable Housing Initiative Fund, which was released in 2017. I'm curious: since the program was released in 2017, has the Headquarters Policy Branch of the Nunavut Housing Corporation studied the success of this program? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. No. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. There have been many references throughout the corporation's business plans and the *Blueprint for Action on Housing* itself in relation to pan-jurisdictional scans and collaboration with other governments; not just federal or municipal, but lateral wise.

As the Nunavut Housing Corporation has committed to conducting this research for the last number of years, since the Blueprint for Action has been released, I would like to ask why such an innovative program such as Yukon's Affordable Housing Program Initiative has never been reviewed, and if the minister will consider doing so? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The Yukon program runs differently than Nunavut. They deal with fewer costs and construction materials are more readily available to their communities. It's the shipping of materials and costs have increased for lumber, which is an increased cost for Nunavut. This will be raised again in our budget. There are always considerations on how we can use less money in Nunavut. Mr. Audla can further elaborate on that. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It's not that there isn't any pan-jurisdictional scanning. It is happening and we're looking at best practices.

With the specific example in the Yukon, right now we're in the process of finalizing an agenda between ourselves, the GNWT and the Yukon government to meet and discuss best practices and to update the pan-territorial analysis and discussion paper in anticipation of the three territories and the ministers to meet and to discuss amongst themselves in planning towards a meeting with the

federal minister. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, Mr. Audla, for that response. The business plan of the Nunavut Housing Corporation itself has addressed the lack of a private rental market, limited homeownership opportunities, and overall the gap and the narrow housing continuum that we have here in the territory. I would like to ask again the question that I asked earlier this morning if the minister agrees that creating such housing fund for non-profits and Inuit orgs as well as societies and municipalities to dip into would greatly benefit the territory as a whole and expand our limited housing continuum. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) If you may, I will have Mr. Audla respond to that. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In looking at the jurisdictions across Canada, Nunavut is probably number one in offering the various homeownership programs that we already offer. We can definitely look at the best examples, like the member has mentioned, but we would have to do a thorough cost-benefit analysis on how we can provide that type of program and

it would probably involve other departments as well and in my opinion right now, considering the construction allocation methodology review and the homeownership program review as well, we will be looking at ways of improving what we currently offer and how we can add to that. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, Mr. Audla. I would like to move on to the chair of the standing committee's opening comments and on page 2 there was reference to the annual report and the information regarding high-income public housing tenants being excluded from the most recent annual report where it has previously been provided in additional information, expanded information. I would like to ask: why was it decided that this information was to be excluded from the most recent annual report? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you. I'm not too familiar with the annual reports from previous years. (interpretation ends) I'll have Mr. Audla respond to that. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It's not necessarily excluded but presented in a different way. Previous years' was not an accurate picture of the actual numbers when it came to the levels of income and the

rents assessed for those levels of income. Previous years included all people within that household whereas this year's annual report is more focused in on the actual tenants, the ones that have their names on the actual lease.

When you look at page 27 of the annual report, it gives you the circle graph or the pie chart, sort of breaking down by percentage, 60 percent of households has been the largest with households being charged between zero and 5 percent of household income, which is obviously a large majority, 22 percent of which are being assessed at between 5 and 10 percent of income, which translates to about \$1,156. The previous 60 percent number is \$3,273, 14 percent of the households are charged between 10 and 15 percent of income, which represents 730, and then 4 percent of households are charged between 15 percent and 20 percent of income, which is about 260 within the territory. For us, we felt that this was a more accurate narrative of the rents assessed within Nunavut. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, Mr. Audla. I do recognize that page 27 does include a pie chart as well as a percentage, but it excludes some very crucial information, the exact numbers, whereas that information was presented in prior years. If I have learned one thing about annual reports and financial statements, consistency is key. When you're moving crucial information such as actual numbers, you lose your comparability. I would like to ask if, going forward, that information will be brought back to the historical format, including the formal

numbers as well as the bar graphs. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) We can do that. We can provide that. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, minister. Further to Mr. Audla's comments that it has been recalculated to include only the tenant's income as opposed to the household income, I'm curious why that decision was made, specifically because the homeownership programs are all based on household income, which in my mind the sole individual applying would probably make more of a sense to provide the actual accurate picture. I was just curious why the sudden for the information on the public housing income. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) If you may, I'll have Mr. Audla respond to that. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The pie chart in the annual report is more specific to the rent assessed. In the context of trying to determine household income, we would have to thoroughly do a survey as to

what actual income is being earned across the territory to best determine the viability of homeownership within each community. For the purposes of the annual report, it was broken down just by those that are actually on the lease, the tenant and the co-tenant for rental assessment purposes. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Moving on to my next question I had posed recently to the Minister of the Nunavut Housing Corporation was the fact that tenant income is provided for public housing tenants, but not for staff housing tenants. I asked the minister at the time if the format of the annual report could be amended to include staff housing tenant income. I don't recall if I got a clear answer, so I would like to ask the minister again if that is something that the minister would consider for the next annual report. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you.
(interpretation ends) That is on the two departments of Finance and Human Resources. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Just for further clarification, the minister responded that that's on the responsibility of Finance and HR with relation to the NHC's annual report. I just want to get further

clarification on that response. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) From my understanding, he was referring to staff housing rent. That again is under the Department of Finance and Human Resources. (interpretation ends) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Lightstone.

Mr. Lightstone: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I just find it odd that the housing corporation provides annual income of one group of public housing tenants and not the income of the staff housing tenants.

The only reason why this is brought up is that there is somewhat of an inequity in the staff housing program as well as Finance's homeownership allowance program and the fact that the allocation or distribution of staff housing is fairly high among the highest earning employees of the Government of Nunavut. I'm just curious how and if the government will ever disclose that information. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. To clarify your question, (interpretation ends) I will have Mr. Audla respond to that. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The difference between staff housing and public housing; we provide assistance to the LHOs, who determine who will be listed on the public housing lease, and we assist them in determining through CRA, the income for certain periods of the year. We don't have that authority with staff.

The rent assessed for staff housing units is based on size of the units and then that rent is then deducted from the payroll. We don't see what rents are being assessed for specific employees, nor do we really control the level of rent. I hope that answers the question of the member, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Are you done? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Before I start my questions I should just mention that pages in the budget, the headings in the budget don't match the business plan, so if I do stray into an area that I'm not supposed, I apologize in advance.

The first question I wanted to ask is regarding funding from the federal government for housing in Nunavut. On page 4 of the business plan, in the first paragraph it mentions that "...a 20-year investment with a total of 1.55 billion (\$77.5 million/year) is required to close Nunavut's housing gap."

When we look at that \$77 million a year, for the upcoming fiscal year, is the housing corporation going to access enough federal funding to meet...? Are we going to access \$77 million worth of federal funding? (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairman (Mr. Akoak): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No. Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Did the housing corporation provide any input to the federal government on their recent...? I know they were going around doing budget consultations. Did the housing corporation put a submission in to the federal government or provide any input to them? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have tried to work with the federal government and we have requested further funds, but they have not identified nor set aside some funds or the amount. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) As it stands now, how many millions roughly do you stand to access from the federal government in the upcoming fiscal? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: My apologies. If you may, I'll have Mr. Audla respond to that. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It's unchanging year after year after we sign the National Housing Strategy funds for the period of 10 years at \$240 million, so that \$24 million per year will remain.

We are hopeful on other fronts based on a proposal basis in competition with the rest of Canada for other additional funds. The reference to the \$1.55 billion within the business plan is in reference to just to address the 3,000 plus gap that we're facing here in Nunavut right now. That's how much more we would need on top of what we get right now. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) The last question on this topic, not on this page but on this topic, so there is an application in for Rapid Housing funding and I really hope that you are successful in that application. How many other major applications for funding do you have in to federal agencies? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can he rephrase your question, please? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you. Mr. Main, rephrase your question. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'm just asking: what major applications are in to federal funding sources? The only one that I

know about right now is the Rapid Housing application, which we have discussed in the House. What other applications have been submitted currently? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We have one other application other than the (interpretation ends) Rapid Housing Initiative. (interpretation) I think it's what is called (interpretation ends) HBAP, Home Buyers Assistance program. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Just a clarification, Mr. Chairman, is this the right page to ask about the Inuit Employment Plan? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Yes, it is. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main: Okay. (interpretation) Thank you. (interpretation ends) I wonder if the minister can explain a little bit about what the housing corporation is doing to increase Inuit employment in terms of working with the local housing organizations. It's very encouraging to see that the housing corporation is tapping into experienced Inuit employees within local housing organizations. Is this something that you're planning to continue with and is it successful to date? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With the housing corporation's programs still going, there has to be 30 percent Inuit employment in a project. We also have Travis Kalluak, who is spearheading the program, from what I understand. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) My next questions are about the headquarters office which is located in Arviat. I know that the headquarters office has gone through some changes in the past years. Right now I'm just looking for an understanding of what roles the headquarters office in Arviat fulfills. I know that the finance function was moved to Iqaluit. What roles does the headquarters office fulfill currently? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The office in Arviat deals solely with homeownership and homeownership programs that are provided by the housing corporation, and also the housing rent scale. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) My last questions on this page are about the housing corporation's role as the largest landlord in Nunavut. It's mentioned on page 2 of your business plan in the first paragraph

here, and it says that the number of units that the housing corporation has makes the housing corporation the largest provider in the territory, and then there are different types of units.

In terms of the housing corporation's footprint as a landlord is from a high level, the housing corporation, does the housing corporation want to continue to be the largest housing provider in the territory or does the housing corporation want to take opportunities to shrink its footprint and to see more people going into homeownership or see a greater role for the private market, for example? Does that type of strategic direction exist at the board level or management level? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairman: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It applies to both. The housing corporation handles... (interpretation ends) Public housing, we know that that's something that we need more of in the territory, as well as support more communities to be homeowners. That's both. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. (interpretation ends) Okay, that's in terms of public housing and homeownership. On the same page it mentions staff housing, and I'm asking about the ownership of staff housing, not necessarily the administration. It mentions on page 2, the corporation "maintains 1,640 staff housing units (of

which 455 are owned and 1,185 are leased)...”

In terms of the ownership of staff housing, does the corporation have a strategic direction in terms of it's preferable to lease these staff housing units or it's preferable to own them? Again, I'm trying to ask you at a high level in terms of the footprint of the housing corporation as a landlord. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson (Ms. Angnakak): Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) It is better and preferable to own those staff housing units due to price. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Sorry, I was preoccupied. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Okay, it's preferable to own as opposed to lease. Is that a direction that was given from the board? Was there a strategy in place that spells that out or is that just the current direction of the day? I don't see it anywhere in the blueprint and so I'm just trying to understand what drives the push to go in that direction. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thinking about those, when they are owned by the housing corporation, it provides more revenue to

the housing corporation. That's the main reason, and the president can add to this, (interpretation ends) Ms. Chairperson, if you allow. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We do want to encourage increased ownership by private companies to be able to offer affordable options for leasing purposes, but at the same time it's more economical for the Nunavut Housing Corporation to be able to own the staff housing, but where there are robust private markets for the purposes of leases, we go through the bidding process.

When it comes to long-term arrangements, it's if and only when, say, those private companies offer up those units at prices that are undeniable and that make the best economic sense, then we would seriously consider those. The more robust the housing market, the more full the housing continuum, the better. Overall, it's whatever type of increased housing in whatever form is what our overall strategic goal is. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Thank you for the response. It's something that I have been trying to understand better myself. We want private companies; ideally they would be owned by Inuit or Nunavummiut. We want private companies to be successful, and real estate is one of the cornerstones of any economy. On one hand, the housing corporation wants to own units where possible and on the other hand,

we want successful businesses in Nunavut, and the housing corporation shouldn't be expected to do everything.

It's just a comment, Madam Chairperson, that I think the housing corporation, as the largest housing provider in the territory, does have to balance its activities with the need for a healthy private sector and the healthy private sector-driven economy. (interpretation) I am done, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) It's just a comment. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Okay, next one on my list is Ms. Towtongie. (interpretation) You're up.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. If I am mistaken in my assumption, please correct my blunder immediately, Madam Chairperson. Nonetheless, it is regarding the business plan, page 4 where it speaks about the level of funding from the National Housing Strategy.

(interpretation ends) "Current funding levels under the National Housing Strategy barely allow Nunavut to meet additional housing needs for the territory's growing population." This means that we are not actually addressing the housing shortage. In fact as units age, the housing gap will likely increase. Longer-term funding commitments from the federal government are critical to addressing Nunavut's ongoing housing crisis. It is estimated that a 20-year investment with a total of \$1.55 billion (\$77.5 million/year) is required to close Nunavut's housing gap."

My question is: what is the situation with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation withdrawing their funding, if I'm correct, over how many years is it that they will withdraw their funding? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Now, in my earlier response, the federal government received another request additionally from the Nunavut Housing Corporation, and based on the nine-year agreement, there is still \$9 million that is used by the NHC to provide more assistance to the communities, and this is continuing to be implemented. The funds are set aside for nine years, and it is still set at that time frame. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Thank you. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I thank the minister for responding to my question. When does the money from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation end? My other question is; reading page 13, (interpretation ends) "There was announcement in May, 2020 increased federal support for shelters, as well as distinctions-based Indigenous housing strategies."

My question is: we are dealing with public housing in Nunavut, so how do we, as a public government get some of the dollars based on Indigenous housing strategies? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: It's okay. Minister Nakashuk, can you respond to that.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) If you will allow Mr. Audla to respond to that. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I will start by saying the CMHC funding reduction over time is based on a social housing agreement that was signed about 10 years ago and year by year it does go down, and it is for the purposes of O&M.

The Government of Nunavut picks up where there is the increased gap based on the reduction from the CMHC. When it comes to indigenous housing-specific dollars, that is more or less left with the Inuit organizations and with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, and the Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, along with the three regions.

We are still reaching out to them and having those discussions as to how to best approach that, but both discussions are still ongoing. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: My profound apologies, Madam Chairperson. Okay? Thank you.

In saying that, that tells me that Nunavut Housing Corporation has to seek out other ways of getting houses, such as the Agnico Eagle Mine or Baffinland. This tells me that Nunavut Housing

Corporation continues to work with these different mines in Nunavut.

As of today, have there been meetings, has the Government of Nunavut and Agnico Eagle subcommittee on housing, has it been held? What specific action has been taken? My final question, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation) I'm done.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk
(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for asking that question. They have not met yet with the Agnico Eagle subcommittee. This has not really helped with public housing, it's only basically for getting private homes for their workers, that's basically all we've talked to them about. It's mainly for their workers. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Qirngnuq, you're next.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Welcome, minister and your officials. The questions I was originally going to query the minister on have already been brought up by my colleague about the funding from the federal government.

I want to move to this item, so I will ask about this with one or perhaps two questions. Now, when a request is submitted for supplemental appropriation from the government, they have the freedom to relay the request to the other funding processes, perhaps even directly from the federal government or others.

I was thinking along these lines, hence my question Madam Chair, what about the other territorial housing corporations' aside from Nunavut, and to use the example of the NWT, they have their own housing corporation as well.

I wanted to know, when funding is made available, does the housing corporation first canvass their potential audience to determine if more funding is available for housing projects as a pan-territorial request? Would that make things clearer, at least I think so, Madam Chairperson, which is why I am asking about it. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for asking that question. Yes, Government of Nunavut, NWT and Yukon have met together to see how each government runs housing. They do the same thing we do; they request money from the federal government for their own housing corporations. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Perhaps in the future, we may have more options that allow pan-territorial projects, as all territories are constantly searching for more funding.

Here in Nunavut, I believe we are the poorest. Now to turn to another topic, this may not even be something to ponder, Madam Chairperson, however I want to ask the question. Can the minister make time to visit the smaller

communities, as they would warmly welcome her in the future if she is thinking to do a visit, but perhaps in the short term so I would like to understand if she would be open to travelling to smaller places? That is my question, Madam Chairperson. Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I like that question. I would like it too if that could happen. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Qirngnuq.

Mr. Qirngnuq (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I am submitting this question on behalf of my constituents in Taloyoak, who would love to welcome the minister to their community, primarily for the following reason.

As a smaller community, the rental scale used to determine rents are the highest in the region, and they would love to welcome the administrators to see how to lower their rents, and to welcome them to do a study on how to resolve the fact that they have the highest rent scales and would like more options related to housing, either in reduction of the rent scale or in housing options, and how to apply for housing.

I imagine the minister will receive a letter inviting her to tour the community. This is just a comment, so I will stop there for now, Madam Chairperson. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. Mr. Qamaniq, it's your turn.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. This the first time I have ever been involved in the Nunavut Housing Corporation plans for housing. It is quite different from the other government departments we have reviewed previously, as the budget is set differently. Perhaps if we are not on that subject yet, Madam Chairperson, the question I want to ask relates to that so you can let me know if I can proceed.

Chairperson (interpretation): Mr. Qamaniq. Did you want to comment further? Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): I was trying to ask a question but you were chatting with a staff member, so I apologize for the confusion.

Now, the financial presentation is quite different from the previous departments we were reviewing, and the questions I would like to ask may not apply to this section, so if I am remiss, please let me know that it will be at another item slot. You can advise me to wait if I am wrong, so I give you leeway.

This is related to item 7 within the pages listing the priorities for 2020-21, and it is the amount written directly beneath that, where I believe it talks about *Turaaqtavut* and I wonder if I can ask questions related to that subject, Madam Chairperson?

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Qamaniq. Indeed, the business plan along with the main estimate figures are not the same. (interpretation ends) It's very difficult and kind of confusing. We don't have the same headings, so I understand your confusion, as I am confused too.

That's what we've been trying to do here, is trying to figure out exactly which pages we can ask questions on because they are not the same as the business plan. (interpretation) Please proceed, Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Within the business plan, priorities for 2020-21, the second bullet underneath states, "In line with the Inuusivut priorities within *Turaaqtavut*, continue to respond to the needs of Nunavummiut for safe and affordable housing, including support for elders." Now, they want to construct new buildings. Obviously the housing corporation has "awarded contracts for the construction of 106 new housing units." According to what is written down, it is quite clear that contracts will be awarded.

As well, right below that it states that "The Nunavut Housing Corporation is in the development stage of constructing 16 public housing units in Iqaluit along the beach front, of which eight will be aging in place and barrier free units to support housing elders." Further, there are 23 units that are becoming dilapidated due to antiquated age and they will be dismantling them and replacing them with new buildings. That is the impression I got.

With regard to the contracts that are going to be awarded, within the budget year for 2020-21, if the appropriations are approved, does this mean 106 new units will be contracted out? Do I understand that correctly? I wonder if that is a correct assumption, and further underneath that bullet is the next item I would like a business case for, if they are able to respond to it as well, so these

two questions if that is possible, Madam Chairperson. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. (interpretation ends) Yes, it's (interpretation) getting into capital a little bit, (interpretation ends) but (interpretation) it's in the (interpretation ends) business plan, so (interpretation) you can ask the question. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): I'm sorry, Madam Chairperson. I want him to rephrase his question, please. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. "In line with the Inuusivut priorities within *Turaaqtavut*, continue to respond to the needs of Nunavummiut for safe and affordable housing, including support for elders." The status is that "The Nunavut Housing Corporation increased public housing and staff housing stock through new builds."

Chairperson: Mr. Qamaniq, can you get to your question instead, please? I recognize that that's in the business plan, but what's your question in relation to that bullet? Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq: They're going to sign a contract to build 160 new housing units. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you, Mr. Qamaniq. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends)

For the fiscal 2020-21, 106 public housing units and 10 staff housing units are planned and all NHC plans to construct public housing in Naujaat, Iqaluit, Pond Inlet, Hall Beach, Kugaaruk, Gjoa Haven, *amma* Kimmirut. The corporation is also planning to build staff housing units in Gjoa Haven and Kugluktuk. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Also, underneath that bullet, is a line item that identifies that the "Nunavut Housing Corporation and the Government of Nunavut and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., and the RIAs..." I wanted to speak to the last information item for Inuit home ownership programs.

Does the Government of Nunavut provide this program as part of their housing assistance programming, so that they can become a homeowner, and this applies to everyone, Inuit and non-Inuit, as this program is for all residents? Does this program specifically target Inuit or non-Inuit when we are talking about the homeownership programs written here? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. This is available for any citizen, no matter who it is. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Qamaniq.

Mr. Qamaniq (interpretation): I will not ask any further questions, but want to understand this statement here “Inuit homeownership” and I thought it was a totally different topic which is why I queried you about this program, as well as the programs offered by our government for homeownership.

I just went with the written title, and based on that, I don't have any further questions related to this matter, and I am also getting quite heated so I will stop there for now. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. Mr. Pedersen.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I just have one quick question and I believe it's going to be a quick answer.

For the business plan for future builds, I would like the minister to guarantee that all units are built with a front and back door because I have seen previous units, ten-plexes in my community have only the front door and it would make me feel a lot better if you can guarantee that future builds have both a front and a back entrance. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: Yes, (interpretation) and to add to that on Mr. Qamaniq's question, the homeownership programs for communities are slated more towards Inuit to get more assistance. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. Even though it's confusing, I have no further names on my list. \$8,977,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Debt Repayment. O-IV-3. \$10,919,000. Debt Repayment. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Who is the debt owed to? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk: If that's the \$755,000, that would be to the CMHC. I'll clarify that a bit more here. \$10,919,000 was transferred under the social housing agreement between the CMHC and Nunavut Housing Corporation, and it includes a \$20,438,000 contribution received from CMHC, and this is withheld by the CMHC to pay down mortgages. (interpretation) This assistance for the return of housing to the Housing Corporation, that's the \$755,000 this year. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): You are done? I have no more names on my list. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: Madam Chairperson. Thank you for recognizing me. The debt, over the years, how much is it all together to the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation, I believe, all together, not just year by year? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) In total, the Nunavut Housing Corporation is working with CMHC, through the National Housing Strategy (interpretation) they have been provided funding from that. (interpretation ends) Until 2038, (interpretation) the total is \$130.7 million. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie: My final question, Madam Chairperson. Thank you, minister for your response. Does that tell us they will be paying off \$10 million per year, or is there any formulas in paying off this type of amount in the following years? Thank you, Madam Chairperson. My final question.

Chairperson: Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you for the question. Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It started in 2019, and it's divided yearly as a percentage as to how much will be returned to the housing corporation. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Debt Repayment. \$10,919,000. (interpretation) Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Okay. We're on district offices. \$9,776,000 on page O-IV-4. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Okay. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) I feel like I should apologize, I don't really want to. Thanks to the minister for providing the standing committee with a response to our questions, some referring to the letter dated February 16, 2021 regarding the new management agreement with local housing organizations, which was provided to us. This is on page 8 of the letter and this is the very first page of the new management agreement.

Under the summary of agreement, it mentions that the ultimate accountability for programs falls to the Minister responsible for Nunavut Housing. It mentions that the minister has the ability to suspend or terminate the agreement should there be a serious breach of contract. The housing corporation has the authority to step in and administer the local housing programs if needed.

In the most recent fiscal year, how many LHOs were put into either debt recovery, deficit recovery, or needed direct intervention from the housing corporation? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for your question. There's none for this year. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I'm very happy to hear that. (interpretation ends) That's good news, and it's my understanding that the general trend or the need for the

housing corporation to step in and intervene with local housing organizations has been going down over the years. I wonder if the minister can indicate whether that is the case and, if so, what's helping the local housing organizations get stronger in terms of their abilities. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. That is indeed a fact. We usually invite the management of the local housing associations to have a meeting here so that they can voice their concerns and issues. It did make things a lot better. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you, Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) I'll ask it under this heading. The question I have is about mould, and I know that the housing corporation has been doing a lot of work to better equip your district staff, as well as your local housing organization staff to deal with mould abatement, deal with mould issues, but to my understanding, some of the newer units that are being constructed, because they are so airtight, they're more prone to mould, unfortunately.

When you look at the money that's being put towards mould programs, and the amount of mould within your housing stock, is what you're doing right now and what you're proposing in this upcoming fiscal year; is it enough to keep on top of or address the mould

issues or are you looking at further investments that will be needed to further address the mould issues? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Thank you for your question. With the houses that are being constructed today, we are looking at building another way, but there has been an improvement with the newer stock. Also, the local housing organization staff have been trained to do mould remediation, and we do get outside help if there's a requirement. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) I think the last area I wanted to ask questions on is on page 10 of the business plan and again, I'm not sure if I should be asking this question.

I wanted to ask a question about the work to reduce costs associated with housing through technological innovation. It mentions the Canadian High Arctic Research Station, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; so technological innovation to reduce the cost.

What specifically are we talking about here? Are we talking heating systems? Are we talking lighting? What specific technologies are being looked at? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you. It includes everything. (interpretation ends) Maybe Mr. Audla could respond more to that. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It is pretty much anything and everything under the sun, be it the improvement of air exchange units to be more functional in the extreme climates that Nunavut faces, to the design, insulation type, and other areas where we can look at higher energy-efficient type of oil burning furnaces, keeping in mind that even in the current cases where there are existing higher efficiency burn rates for oil heaters, their output within the chimney is not high enough in temperature where you see ice buildup and it becomes somewhat of a safety issue.

When there is innovation happening in the southern climes, we want to be able to have that translated up to where we are here in Nunavut and to see whether they are actually functional. There is a lot of collaboration on that aspect. The most amount of work that has been done between the Canadian High Arctic Research Station, CMHC, and the National Research Council has been on mould remediation. They have found that the work that we are doing is actually something that can be looked to and used as a trailblazer with respect to how to mitigate mould within envelopes. A lot of good work has been done there.

As I said, it is anything that we can do to improve the current builds that we do and that are relevant to the climate that

we are currently in. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) My last question on this same point is: do you have any plans in the upcoming fiscal year to explore solar? I'm thinking specifically of the roof space that you have on top of your public housing units. The cost of solar is coming down every year in terms of install costs, and it could be something that could pay for itself over a number of years.

I'm thinking of the work that is being done in government offices across different regions in Nunavut. Energy efficiency investments pay for themselves over a number of years. Is there any similar initiative, whether it is solar or other energy efficiency initiatives that you are looking at? (interpretation) That was my last question. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Please wait a moment.

I'm making you wait too long. (interpretation ends) If you may allow Mr. Audla to respond to that. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Very recently we have been entering into discussions with the

Department of Environment and we want to develop a program where solar energy can be used with the single-family dwellings for homeowners and what we can do at the Nunavut Housing Corporation to be able to provide that. We are also in discussions with the Qulliq Energy Corporation as well on their net metering aspects of things and see what we can do on our public housing stock with respect to solar and potential wind energy as well. Those discussions are happening as we speak. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you as well. (interpretation ends) Okay. District Offices. O-IV-4. \$9,776,000. (interpretation) Do you agree?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Okay. (interpretation) We will take a break right now for 15 minutes. Thank you.

>>Committee recessed at 15:11 and resumed at 15:32

Chairperson: What I have decided to do is open up the floor to any more questions regarding the Nunavut Housing Corporation in any area before we go to the main page to approve the budget. Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The 2019-2020 annual report from the housing corporation was tabled last fall on November 5, 2020, it states that the \$39 million was owed up to March 31, 2020. Those debts have increased five times...no, 10.3 percent since 2018-19. What drove that height in debt? Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Ms. Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) If you may, I'll ask Mr. Liu to respond to that. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Liu.

Mr. Liu: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Actually it was based on the schedule we signed with the CMHC. Actually, when we signed it, they also paid us back through funding to pay back the mortgage. The increase is just on the paper based on the schedule. It's not anything like substantial or anything. Thanks.

Chairperson: Ms. Towtongie.

Ms. Towtongie (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I also thank the minister for that adequate response. Now, the Government of Nunavut's Staff Housing Policy was approved in April 2019. The policy falls under the Department of Human Resources, but the housing corporation's 2021-24 business plan states that they will be working with the Department of Human Resources to "ensure they are able to manage staff housing allocations." It also states that the housing corporation will continue to "serve in an advisory capacity. Collaboration with Department of Finance and Department of Human Resources to increase housing options for Inuit employees is ongoing." My question is: what specific housing options for Inuit employees are being considered? That is my final question. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The allocation committee usually deals with that, and I believe you're asking about private homeownership for Inuit employees. Yes, some Inuit have started to rent-to-buy their units, so they are doing that. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. I believe Ms. Towtongie is done. I have no more names on my list. Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) On page 15 of the business plan, it mentions working with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, and this is to lobby for more federal funding. It mentions the Inuit housing strategy, and the implementation. The housing corporation will work closely with Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated once the details of the implementation of the Inuit housing strategy have been determined. I have seen the strategy. When do you expect to hear about the implementation side of things? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) If you may, I'll have Mr. Audla respond to that. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The Inuit housing strategy is borne out of the national Inuit organization, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

For the regions, in this case Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, they also had a Nunavut Inuit-specific housing strategy as well, that the Nunavut Housing Corporation had collaborated with them on. It's now since expired for the past two years or so, and they're in the process of renewing it to go in line with the National Inuit Housing Strategy.

It's in NTI's hands currently, and we have informed them that we can make ourselves available to assist in development of or renewal of this Inuit-specific housing strategy for Nunavut. Once that has been put into place, then the implementation should follow soon thereafter. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) A similar question, on page 16, one of your priorities for the upcoming fiscal mentions updating and supporting an evidence-based business case, in coordination with Nunavut Tunngavik and regional Inuit associations.

My first question is; does this business case currently exist, and if so, would committee members be able to get a copy at some point? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) It doesn't exist right now. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) Okay. Where it says “Continue to update and support,” I guess that it should say, “Create a business case.” Will this business case be completed in this fiscal year upcoming? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) We also have to wait on others on where they stand in this as well. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. When will the evidence-based business case be completed? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. As Mr. Audla stated, they have written to with regard to the plan. That is where it stands right now. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) On the same page under the same bullet, it mentions “Continue to assess the viability of alternative financing options for additional housing stock.”

Trying to find different ways to pay for new houses, other than funding from the federal government. What are the

alternative financing options that are available? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. We also look at the revenue that is coming in and we make considerations about that for maintenance purposes. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) I’m just trying to understand what it says here. It says that there are alternative financing options. What are the alternative financing options? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would like Mr. Audla to explain that. Thank you.

Chairperson: Thank you. Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. On that same bullet it says “Continue to assess the viability of alternative financing options...” It doesn’t reference existing alternative financing options. It is a matter of having that discussion with the Inuit organizations as to what other viable options there may be. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Mr. Main, do you have any more questions?

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Thank you. So it is specifically referring to Inuit organizations. “Viability.” I’m just trying to understand that one.

Moving on to staff housing, on page 22 of the business plan, the first priority for the upcoming fiscal year is “Continue to enhance the staff housing portfolio, particularly in communities with growing staff housing requirements, and evaluate leasing opportunities.” What communities currently have growing staff housing requirements? I ask this question because it is not clear. We don’t have a waiting list that is available to the committee that I know of, so I am interested: which communities have been identified as having growing staff housing requirements? (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I’ll ask Mr. Mike MacPherson to respond.

Chairperson: Mr. MacPherson.

Mr. MacPherson: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I think the easiest way to answer the member’s question is: every community has a growing need for staff housing, but highlighting the decentralized communities are the ones in most need. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

(interpretation ends) Thank you for the response. When I turn to the minister’s letter of February 16, which is very helpful; thank you very much for providing this information, on page 3 of the letter there is a table and it has the staff housing vacancy report. I’m happy to hear that these decentralized communities have been identified as having a need. This is very interesting that you’ve provided numbers of units where staff have been forced to share units, forced shared units. It says shared units voluntary and then shared units forced.

I was noticing that this is my next question; why do the decentralized communities have a higher rate of forced sharing than you know that the regional centers. That’s my question why do the decentralized communities have a higher rate of forced sharing? Is it because they’ve been allocation formula for staff housing was, I’m trying to understand the root of that. Thank you.

Chairperson (interpretation): Thank you. Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. In the communities when the government advertises a position, it states there whether they will need staff housing and with the count of employees and that’s where it sits too. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): Mr. Main, anymore? Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) If we look at the people who are getting forced to share a unit, I realize that this is something

that's probably within human resources, but I would imagine that it's not a good thing to have to be forced to share a unit with somebody maybe you don't know or maybe it's a co-worker. Is the housing corporation using this forced sharing statistic as part of deciding where to build new staff housing or where to lease new staff housing? (interpretation)
Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. When they have a different department allocation. If you want more detail, Mr. McPherson can more properly respond in the details if you can allow him. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. McPherson.

Mr. McPherson: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Yes, we do use the forced share statistics to assist us on either construction or leasing for the communities where the highest forced shares occur. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) The new arrangement where the Department of Human Resources allocates the units and then the housing corporation is still involved in the leasing or the maintenance of them, I have heard or I get a sense that there are pockets of problems. For example, the Department of Environment, from my understanding, they're feeling their conservation officer position is being quite seriously impacted by the lack of

staff housing and those are supposed to be some of the top priority positions for units.

In terms of this new arrangement where Human Resources is in charge of allocating the units as opposed to the housing corporation, which is how it used to be, I think the question is: is this new arrangement going to be evaluated in terms of issues that it's creating and whether things should go back to the old method of the housing corporation allocating the units? Is that something that will be re-evaluated after one year or is it just continually up for debate? If you can't answer the question, I apologize for asking it. (interpretation)
Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk

(interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Regarding getting the detailed answer, if you allow Mr. Audla to respond. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Just a point of clarity on the allocation committee, it's a GN-wide committee. It includes all departmental ADMs, so it was bumped to the level of ADM for the purposes of allocations.

For the broader question of evaluation, it's too soon to say. It has been implemented and so far so good. I would hazard to guess if there would be an evaluation. As it stands right now, there are no indicators, and again, it would be too early to say. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Mr. Main.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) Going back to your business plan on page 22, I'm trying to understand how the private sector in a community that doesn't have a strong... a limited leasing market. I'm trying to understand how the housing corporation signals to the private sector that there is a need for more staff housing because MLAs don't have access to staff housing waiting lists. I'm assuming that the private sector doesn't have access to that list either or even these numbers that have been provided in a letter to us in terms of forced sharing.

How does the housing corporation signal to the private sector if it's in a community like Arviat, for example? How does the housing corporation tell the private sector, "If you build a five-plex, we will probably be interested in leasing every one of those units"? Does the minister write a letter to the private sector? Are they able to ask questions to the housing corporation? I'm trying to understand that relationship. (interpretation) Thank you.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. The Nunavut Housing Corporation, when they undertake a search in this manner, it usually means that the requests will most like go through the (interpretation ends) tender (interpretation) process. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Main, you have 22 seconds left. Mr. Main, your last question.

Mr. Main (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. (interpretation ends) I'm aware that the housing corporation puts out a call for interest or a call for tenders, but I'm trying to get at... if a private developer wants to build a new apartment building, that's millions of dollars, and they need to have an understanding of what the demand is.

Do they want to build a five-plex, a ten-plex, do they want to build 20 units? I'm just trying to understand how the private sector is supposed to understand the needs of government in terms of staff housing, and I would like to suggest that if there isn't a process or a way to exchange information of that type that it be looked at. (interpretation) Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson: Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Mr. Audla can respond to that. Thank you.

Chairperson: Mr. Audla.

Mr. Audla: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. It would be up to the private company to carry out their due diligence as to whether or not they are going to spend millions of dollars in providing staff housing or housing in general and they are more than welcome to pick up the phone and give the Nunavut Housing Corporation a call and then we can give them estimations as to probabilities within their communities as to whether we would be able to utilize them or not, but again it is up to the private industry to carry out their due diligence. Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Chairperson (interpretation): I thank you as well. (interpretation ends) Let's go to Nunavut Housing Corporation. M-3. Total Operations and Maintenance, to be Voted. \$219,125,000. Agreed?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Do members agree we have concluded the review of the Nunavut Housing Corporation?

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairperson: Does the minister have any closing comments? Minister Nakashuk.

Hon. Margaret Nakashuk (interpretation): Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I would like to thank my officials for working very diligently to complete this submission, and further, I appreciate my predecessors who managed this portfolio, as they too were working hard to implement these same priorities to move the file forward.

The housing issue in Nunavut is not an easy task. Nonetheless, I am very appreciative of my colleagues for their questions, and I apologize as in some responses I was not clear enough. However, I will just stop at thanking each and all of you, as well as my officials here. Thank you.

>> *Applause*

Chairperson (interpretation): I thank you as well. (interpretation ends) Sergeant-at-Arms, you can escort the witnesses out.

We will take a quick five-minute break and then we will get to the opening

comments for the Minister of Family Services. Thank you.

>> *Committee recessed at 15:56 and resumed at 16:03*

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

Chairman (Mr. Rumbolt): I would like to call the committee meeting to order, please. We are now moving on to the Department of Family Services and if we can start with Minister Sheutiapik. If you could introduce your witnesses and if you could continue on into your opening comments, please.

Oh, sorry. I am jumping ahead of myself. Okay, let's try this again. I would like to ask Minister Sheutiapik: do you have officials that you would appear before the committee? Minister.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik: Yes, I do Mr. Chairperson.

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

Some Members: Agreed.

Chairman: Thank you. Now let's get to where I was before. For the record, if you could please introduce your witnesses and continue on into your opening comments. Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik (interpretation): Thank you, Chairperson. (interpretation ends) To my left is Deputy Minister Yvonne Niego, and to my right, we have Lindsay

Turner, and Arijana Haramincic. Thank you, *Itsivautaaq*.

Chairman: Thank you and if you could please continue with your opening comments. Minister Sheutiapik.

Hon. Elisapee Sheutiapik: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For the record, I want to do one wink. I feel very protected. I have a former officer here, but upstairs in my office is another female Inuk officer, so I just wanted to... . Inuusiq, this one's for you.

I am pleased to be here today to present and discuss the proposed 2021-22 Main Estimates and Business Plan for the Department of Family Services.

Mr. Chairman, for 2021-22, the Department of Family Services is proposing an operating budget of \$161,146,000, which represents an increase of 3.4 percent, or \$5,313,000, over last year's main estimates. These increases include:

- Under Poverty Reduction, \$515,000 to support the ongoing operations of shelters in the Kivalliq region.
- Under Family Wellness, \$2,713,000 for increases in residential care costs for providing placements and supports for adults and children with special and complex needs in residential care facilities.
- \$825,000 for family violence services which will expand emergency supports by increasing current funding for existing family violence shelters and facilitate the planning and operating of shelters in

Gjoa Haven, Baker Lake, Pangnirtung, and Pond Inlet.

- \$600,000 for contribution funding to support the development of youth in crisis initiatives across Nunavut.
- Under Income Assistance, \$660,000 for the Senior Citizens Supplementary Benefit program to increase supports to seniors through the Senior Citizens Supplementary Benefit as well as the Senior Fuel Subsidy.

These budget increases reflect the changes my department has been undertaking to enhance and strengthen service delivery for Nunavut children and families. Work has also been done to streamline the programs and services provided by the Department of Family Services to ensure priority is given to Nunavummiut that need our services the most. This work included the department's reorganization and the transfer of files such as Immigration, the Office of the Public Guardian, and the Financial Assistance for Nunavut Students program to other departments.

Mr. Chairman, this proposed operating budget would allow the department to address commitments in *Turaaqtavut*, while improving our ability to provide prevention services, awareness, care, and support to Nunavummiut as they work towards personal well-being.

I would be happy to respond to question from members of the standing committee on the proposed 2021-22 Main Estimates and Business Plan for the Department of Family Services. (interpretation) Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Minister Sheutiapik. Does the chair of the standing committee have opening comments? Ms. Angnakak.

Ms. Angnakak: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Members of the Standing Committee on Social Wellness have reviewed the 2021-22 Main Estimates and Business Plan of the Department of Family Services.

Mr. Chairman, the proposed operations and maintenance budget for the Department of Family Services is just over \$161 million for the 2021-22 fiscal year, which represents an increase of approximately \$5 million from its 2020-21 budget. While the majority of the increase in funding will be allocated for residential care costs, members welcome the proposed increases in supports for shelters, seniors, and youth.

During her appearance before the standing committee to discuss her draft 2021-22 budget and business plans, the minister indicated that her department had not been involved in the recent federal decision to provide new funding to build a women's shelter in Nunavut as well as in the other Inuit Nunangat regions. Members encourage the minister in her efforts to work with such organizations as Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada to ensure that this initiative succeeds.

The standing committee supports the department's plans to open new domestic violence shelters in four Nunavut communities. Additional supports and resources for shelters which are currently operating will also be welcome. Members encourage the department to continue working with

communities which have expressed interest in opening shelters but require assistance with developing their proposals.

The Department of Family Services also provides support for safe homes in communities where individuals open their own homes to provide temporary shelter for those in need. Recognizing that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted a number of outreach activities in the past year, the standing committee strongly encourages the minister and her officials to find alternative ways to recruit more residents to take part in this program and provide an important service for their communities.

Mr. Chairman, the standing committee has been given to understand that specific funding will be allocated to develop initiatives to support youth in crisis. While the committee recognizes there are critical needs in this area, members encourage the department to bring forward a more concrete plan for how the resources will be allocated.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Family Services continues to deliver Nunavut's income support programs which are directed towards assisting families, adult individuals, and seniors in meeting their basic needs. While the committee continues to encourage the department to monitor economic trends across the territory to ensure that income assistance benefits keep pace with the rising costs of living, members appreciate that ongoing increases to income assistance benefits could also act as disincentives for clients to seek paid employment.

While income assistance benefits do cover the most basic of needs, the standing committee recognizes the critical importance of such food security initiatives as school-based breakfast and lunch programs as well as the contributions of food banks and soup kitchens. The committee encourages the department to give further consideration to providing more consistent support in the form of core funding to food banks and other such entities which directly address issues of food security.

The standing committee is pleased to support the department's proposed increase in benefits for seniors. A few more dollars in the pockets of eligible seniors across Nunavut will be very welcome. However, members continue to have concerns regarding the department's eligibility policy with respect to the Senior Fuel Subsidy. It has been noted on more than one occasion that the funds allocated for this initiative are rarely fully expended. It seems a shame that money lapses while many elders struggle to make ends meet. Members again encourage the department to remove the income test limits for this benefit.

Mr. Chairman, the Department of Family Services works with the Department of Education and Nunavut Arctic College to ensure that programs, supports, and resources related to adult and post-secondary learning are available to individuals seeking to further their education and gain employment. The standing committee fully supports the department's work in administering the Adult Learning and Training Supports Program to support adults in accessing education and training opportunities.

The department has been working towards amending Nunavut's apprenticeship legislation and members look forward to reviewing suggested improvements to the system which supports Nunavummiut to become skilled trades workers. The department's business plan also indicates that work is ongoing to review the *Adoption Act* and the *Aboriginal Custom Adoption Recognition Act*. Members look forward to receiving further information on any proposed legislative changes in this area.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my opening remarks. I anticipate that individual members will have questions and comments as we proceed. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Angnakak. Are there any general comments? General comments? Mr. Akoak.

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

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

Speaker (interpretation): Good afternoon. (interpretation ends) Report of the Committee of the Whole. Mr. Rumbolt.

Item 20: Report of the Committee of the Whole

Mr. Rumbolt: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Your committee has been considering Bills 59 and 68 and would like to report that Bill 68 is immediately ready for third reading. Mr. Speaker, I move that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be agreed to. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you. (interpretation ends) There is a motion on the floor. Is there a seconder? Ms. Nakashuk.

>>*Laughter*

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

Third Reading of Bills. (interpretation ends) Minister of Finance, Mr. Hickes.

Item 21: Third Reading of Bills

Bill 68 – An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, No. 2 – Third Reading

Hon. George Hickes: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Arviat South, that Bill 68, *An Act to Amend the Revolving Funds Act, No. 2*, be read for the third time. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

An Hon. Member (interpretation): Question.

Speaker: All those in favour. Opposed. The motion is carried and Bill 68 is ready for assent.

>>*Applause*

Orders of the Day. Mr. Clerk.

Item 22: Orders of the Day

Clerk (Mr. Quirke): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just a reminder that the Standing Committee on Legislation meets tomorrow at half past one here in the Chambers.

Orders of the Day for March 8:

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 58
 - Bill 59
 - Bill 60
 - Bill 61
 - Bill 62
20. Report of the Committee of the
Whole
21. Third Reading of Bills
22. Orders of the Day

Thank you.

Speaker (interpretation): Thank you.
(interpretation ends) This House stands
adjourned until Monday, March 8, at
1:30 p.m.

Sergeant-at-Arms.

>>*House adjourned at 16:20*

