

- Thank you, Mr. Speaker.
 - As we gather for this sitting of the Assembly, we are reminded of the immense responsibility and privilege we hold as we work for the betterment of our people and our communities. We continue to face unique challenges and opportunities, and it is through the collaborative efforts of each and every one of you that we can navigate the path ahead.
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- As the Assembly is aware, Mr. Speaker, the Nunatsiavut Government continues to express disagreement and opposition towards the NunatuKavut Community Council's claims of Indigenous rights and self-government.
 - NCC has no legitimacy or credibility as an Inuit organization, and its attempts to claim Inuit rights and status are an insult to Labrador Inuit and other true Inuit of Canada.
 - NCC is exploiting the ignorance and goodwill of many Canadians who are unaware of the distinctiveness and diversity of Indigenous peoples in our country. They are seeking to access the lands, rights, and resources that rightfully belong to Labrador Inuit and the Innu Nation, and is also undermining the efforts of Inuit to preserve and promote our culture, language, and way of life.
 - NCC is not only trying to steal from us, but also trying to erase who we are. Make no mistake, Mr. Speaker, we will do whatever we can to ensure this does not happen.
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- Mr. Speaker, in relation to the issue around NCC, we have repeatedly called for the resignation of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation Minister Lisa Dempster, as we have no confidence in her ability to carry out her duties in an unbiased manner.
- Ministers of the Crown are required to fulfill their responsibilities with accountability, by demonstrating impartiality, appropriate diligence and

competence in the discharge of their duties, Mr. Speaker. Minister Dempster, through her public comments and actions in support of the NCC, has failed to uphold the standards required of her as Minister in her current portfolio.

- She has repeatedly supported the NCC (on social media and at public events and through lobbying federal ministers directly, etc.) in its goal to seek a land claim. We would expect Ministers of the Crown to remain objective in their positions on issues such as this, given that there has been no formal acceptance of NCCs land claim by the federal or provincial governments.
 - That is clearly not the case in this matter. In light of this, as a government we have lost trust in her to represent the best interests of Inuit or her ability to discharge her duties fairly without being partial to the goals and objectives of the NCC.
 - Ms. Dempster is a member of NCC and a former long-time employee of the Labrador Metis Nation. Her obvious conflict of interest clearly undermines her objectivity, as she stands to benefit personally from any gains achieved by the NCC. Her riding is in the area identified by NCC as an area it is claiming, so her political success is also tied to her support of the NCC.
 - Once again, we call on Premier Furey to immediately remove Minister Dempster from her current portfolio. As long as she remains in her position, achieving reconciliation will be very difficult.
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- Mr. Speaker, earlier this month I attended the apologies delivered by the Premier, on behalf of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, to residential schools survivors in all of our communities, as well as Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Thanks to Minister Asivak and First Minister Williams for accompanying me during the week.
 - While these apologies is a significant step towards acknowledging the harm caused by the residential schools system, Mr. Speaker, it is important to recognize that forgiveness is a personal journey and not all survivors are ready to take that step. We must respect their journey and provide support in any way possible.
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- I, along with the First Minister, Deputy Minister Pain and our archaeologist, Lena Onalik, recently attended a two-day workshop on policies around repatriation at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. We were invited by an international working group from Canada, in collaboration with the

University of Toronto, along with two First Nations bands from British Columbia.

- During the visit, we had the opportunity to tour the National Museum of Scotland, where we sat with the ancestral remains of an unidentified Inuk that were removed from the Hopedale area to 1824. We held a Kullik lighting ceremony, and shared some words and a prayer with the remains. We left gifts of sealskin, Labradorite and a Labrador flag to be kept with the remains until a decision is made on repatriation to Nunatsiavut.
- I should note, Mr. Speaker, that while NG Archaeology is responsible for creating a repatriation policy for our government, is not required to have one in place prior to commencing the repatriation process of the remains. This process can take as long as 18 months to two years to complete.
- During the workshop we learned that there are grave belongings housed at the University of Aberdeen and Labrador Inuit remains at Cambridge University.
- NG Archaeology is currently working on a briefing note to present more detailed information to the NEC. From that, we hope to have guidance on steps moving forward for finalizing our repatriation policy, as well as starting the repatriation process for the Inuit ancestor housed at the University of Edinburgh.

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- Mr. Speaker, I'll be travelling to Ottawa next week, along with the First Minister, for the release of the Federal Housing Advocate's Observational Report on Inuit Housing in Nunatsiavut and Nunavut.
 - The Housing Advocate, the first for Canada, is an independent, non-partisan watchdog whose goal is to drive change on key systemic housing issues and to hold government decision makers accountable for their human rights obligations related to housing and homelessness.
 - The Advocate visited our communities last fall, on the invitation of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, to witness first-hand the housing conditions in Inuit Nunangat. The report summarizes what was learned during those visits.
 - It's a scathing report, Mr. Speaker, but not surprising. There are critical shortages of every type of housing in our communities, particularly Nain and Hopedale, from shelters to transitional housing, to affordable rentals and market housing.

- Housing is the foundation of many of the struggles facing our people, Mr. Speaker, and the report demonstrates how we are impacted by these shortages – from women fleeing violence, to children aging out of foster care with nowhere to go, to men exiting the criminal justice system with no supports. Our communities suffer every day, and have for generations, due to these shortages and indignities.
 - We will be holding a media conference in Ottawa to release the report, and we are also working to set up meetings with key federal ministers to discuss recommendations and a path forward to dealing with what is simply a human rights crisis.
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- In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, as this is our last sitting of the year, I want to wish you and all members of the Assembly, as well as our dedicated staff, best wishes for the holiday season.
- Thank you, Mr. Speaker.