

## MLA spars with premier as assembly opens

*Julie Green says Bob McLeod has not fulfilled promises he made when he was vying for his seat last fall*

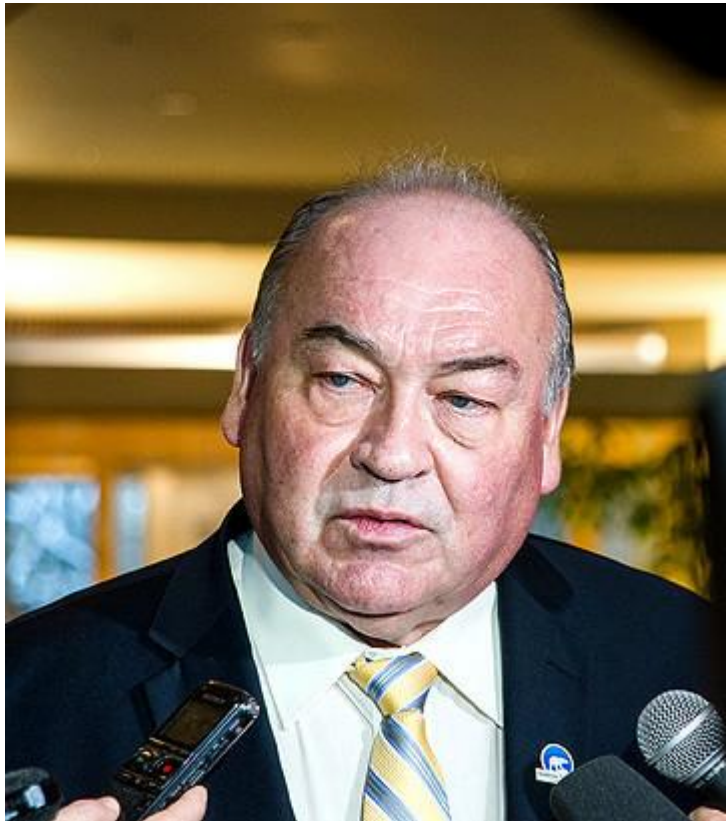
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Northern News Services  
Wednesday, June 1, 2016

### SOMBA K'E/YELLOWKNIFE

The opening day of the second sitting of the 18th Legislative Assembly was marked by a verbal sparring match between Premier Bob McLeod and Yellowknife Centre MLA Julie Green.

McLeod took centre stage early in the proceedings and used his minister's statement to make what sounded very much like a throne speech. He outlined many of the government's priorities during the life of this assembly. But he was also quick to point out the government is facing financial challenges and must keep its spending in line with its revenues.

"The budget is where aspirations meet reality - where the assembly weighs the relative merits of the many things government does and makes practical decisions about what we can do now and what we need to leave for later," McLeod said.



Premier Bob McLeod responds to MLA Julie Green's criticism by saying he is not the only politician who can make things happen in NWT, and thanks her for keeping tabs on his record.  
- NNSL file photo

He went on to say the government is not taking austerity measures to control spending. That's the term many regular MLAs have used in saying they will oppose major cuts to programs and services.

It is anticipated there may be some financial trimming when Finance Minister Robert C. McLeod delivers his first budget in the assembly this afternoon. Green is among the MLAs who have said they will oppose major cuts. However, she did not have the budget in her sights yesterday.

Instead, she used her member's statement to call out the premier for what she called his unfulfilled promises he made during his campaign in the territorial election last fall.

"The premier did make good on his promise to appoint a minister responsible for transparency and democratic engagement. But his pledge to make the government more visible ... has not lived up to expectations," she said.

The MLA said the premier had also dragged his feet on senior's issues and protecting the public from the volatility of the resource sector. She added McLeod has shown little action on developing the agriculture industry in the NWT as well as addressing family violence and outstanding land claims.

McLeod responded by saying he is not the sole representative of the Government of the Northwest Territories.

"I very much appreciate the member keeping a very close tab on my record. Perhaps she could serve as my campaign manager next time around," McLeod quipped. "I think the member has to realize that it's not just one person who makes things happen in this legislative assembly. In consensus government I think we all have to work together. For her to pin the tail on the donkey and say I'm the only one who can make it happen is I think very naive."