

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 121-18(2): COMMITMENT TO SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEES

May 31, 2016

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Premier, the Honourable Bob McLeod. I'll follow up on the statement I just made regarding Mr. McLeod's progress on promises made during his candidacy speech. Mr. McLeod promised "a more cooperative approach with new mechanism to enable greater input from regular MLAs, possibly in the form of joint committees, pardon me, on critical issues such as climate change and family violence. I notice that the violence has made high profile statements of opposition on carbon tax without the Assembly's sanction on this position. So what is the status of these special joint committees where key climate change policies such as carbon tax could be decided? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. ROBERT R. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I very much appreciate the Member keeping a very close tab on my record. Perhaps she can serve as my campaign manager the next time around. We have accomplished quite a great deal. I'm very glad that she was able to lay out what we have accomplished. I think the Member has to realize that it's not just one person that makes things happen in this Legislative Assembly. It's a consensus government and we all have to work together and for her to pin the tail on the donkey and say I'm the only one that can make it happen I think is being very naive.

But we all work together to accomplish a lot of these things and certainly we've already made progress on terms of reference for a joint Cabinet Standing Committee on Aboriginal relations. We expect to make further progress on these other joint committees. I did participate at a call of the Prime Minister of Canada in the First Ministers meeting on climate change. They set up a process for the four working groups that will be working over six months, and that they will be reporting in the fall so that they would be able to fulfill their commitments made under the cop (inaudible) 21. And it is our expectation that we will be involving Members of this House as well as other constituents and stakeholders throughout the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. What I'm talking about here is leadership, and the Premier wanted to be our leader and he is, in fact, our leader. And so in his position as the leader, for example, he has made a statement opposing carbon tax, which is not something Members on this side of the house have any input into whether through a joint committee or any other committee. So what I'm looking for is for the Premier to make good on his inclusive approach that he talked about during his candidacy speech. So when can we expect that to start? Thank you.

HON. ROBERT R. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not aware of what context she's saying that I made that statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Just to pursue this issue, there was a meeting of the Northern premiers in Old Crow, Yukon in which they said that they were against a carbon tax for the North. That's the context. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. I didn't hear a question, and I'll allow the Premier to respond if he wishes. Premier?

HON. ROBERT R. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. She didn't indicate in what context that it was read, but certainly what I said in Vancouver is that we will be updating or coming up with a new greenhouse gas strategy in the Northwest Territories where we will be consulting all of the people in the Northwest Territories in that regard. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry to be quarrelsome on this point, but the Premier was quoted in the media, along with his colleagues, in saying that he opposed a carbon tax for the NWT. What I'm saying is on what authority is he making that statement? Certainly, not without any consultation with this side of the House, thus sort of diminishing the idea of the consensus within consensus government which he said he wanted to promote when he became the premier. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like him to respond that point.

HON. ROBERT R. MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd be very pleased to respond to it. What I said was that by adding additional carbon taxes that would increase the cost of fuel and energy, it would be a significant addition to the cost of living. I said that there is other ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through expenditures by the Government of the Northwest Territories. We have already decreased our greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 by close to 30 percent, and, as I said, we'll put it, and through consultation we'll hear from the people if that's what they want is a carbon tax to increase the cost of living and that's how we are a very inclusive government. That's the leadership that we showing. We'll be talking to the people about it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.