

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE
QUESTION 134-18(2): LABOUR MARKET FORECAST AND NEEDS SURVEY

June 1, 2016

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I would like to just begin by saying that I mis-spoke during my statement by saying that there were 20,000 nonresident workers. In fact, the right number is 2,000.

My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture, and Employment. The Labour Market Forecast and Needs Assessment provides some valuable insights into the nature of the job market to come. But it is weak on the topic of how new workers will be attracted to the territory. The resident work force is forecasted to both age and shrink, so much so, the report says, that the conditions may "limit the territorial government's capacity to deliver public services." What steps is the government taking to attract new workers to prevent this outcome? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As you heard in the budget address that our Minister of Finance had mentioned, we are also reaching out to students who are graduating with the \$2,000 forgivable loan if they come up and do some work in the Northwest Territories. That is one area that we are working in.

We are also developing an action plan based on the labour market report. We are going to be working with Aboriginal governments, industry, business, and our education and training partners. As much as we want to attract residents to the Northwest Territories to fill in some of these positions, we also have to make it a priority to educate, train, develop skills within our own northern labour workforce as well. So we do have some programs, through our student financial assistance incentive programs, as well as working with some of our partners to ensure that we can get some of the skilled labour workforce from the south into the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. The Labour Market Forecast says that from 2015 to 2013 the NWT will need to recruit 777 elementary and kindergarten school teachers, as well as 577 secondary school teachers, 448 early childhood educators and assistants, and 382 college and vocational instructors. It is just staggering numbers. How is that going to happen?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: This is the first time that the government has done a comprehensive review of the labour market needs, the demands of our jobs, in the Northwest Territories. It is something that we are building on. We have our post-secondary education partners that we are working with to try to develop some of these programs. Aurora College is going to be embarking

on a strategic plan this summer and the program will be better aligned with the labour demands that we are seeing through the Labour Market Needs Assessment. So all this stuff is brand new.

Like I said, this is the first time the Northwest Territories has done a comprehensive report like this. It is setting the stage for the decisions that we have to make as a government moving forward in the areas that are shown and identified in that needs assessment. As we have just seen the needs assessment now, we are going to be developing an action plan that will be hopefully tabled in the house in October that is going to identify how we move forward and address these needs in the years to come.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. One of the things that seems to be a gap in this labour market forecast is that it looks primarily at the nonrenewable resource sector jobs rather than some of those which might be part of diversification. I am wondering why the report did not look at diversification, for example filmmaking, traditional economies, agriculture, manufacturing, and so on, rather than concentrating on the declining sector of our economy?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: When the work went out in terms of developing this comprehensive agreement, we got input from all the stakeholders across the Northwest Territories, a lot of it did come from the business side sector. But we also got other programs in place such as the Culture and Heritage Framework and Action Plan. And we also continue to provide funding for arts and culture initiatives.

When it was done, we had municipal governments, Aboriginal government, business, industry, community members, all providing input into this Labour Market Forecast Needs Assessment. I think, maybe some areas were just discussed more than others. But we did get a wide range of input from all sectors of the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral question. Member for Yellowknife centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for his answer. The fact remains that this forecast has gaps when it comes to renewable industry research or employment opportunities. I am wondering if there is a plan to do the same kind of research on them as has been done with the nonrenewable resource sector? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As mentioned, we are going to be developing an action plan that hopefully will be tabled in the House in October, and we will be making sure that those areas are discussed as well. We will see what the action plan comes out of. We will be, once again, discussing that with our industry, business, our education, training partners, and Aboriginal and municipal governments.