

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 167-18(2): ECONOMIC EVALUATION OF ALL-SEASON ROAD TO WHATI

June 6, 2016

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I spoke about the economic evaluation of the road to Whati and I have questions for the Minister of Transportation. So Fortune Minerals wants this road built as a pre-condition of developing its mine. What kind of a commitment is the government getting from Fortune Minerals? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. Minister of Transportation.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Government of the Northwest Territories isn't getting any commitment from Fortune Minerals or we are not giving them any commitment for this road neither. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Given that answer, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister could tell us how the government will make a decision about whether to invest in the road to Whati? Thank you.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The 18th Legislative Assembly mandate confirmed by all our caucus colleagues includes the investment in transportation which also includes investment in the Whati Tlicho all-season road, so that decision moving forward was made by all members of this Assembly.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I don't feel like I made that decision. I haven't, until yesterday, seen the business case for this road. So I encourage the Government to bring this investment forward for consideration especially given the fact that the economic benefit of the road alone without the mine is so small, is this road in fact a subsidy to the mining industry?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: This road is not a subsidy for the mining industry. This road was brought forward by the Tlicho Government and it was pushed forward alongside with the Department of Transportation. And it's unfortunate maybe the member didn't get to read the business case before caucus decided that this was part of our 18th Assembly's in our mandate, but it is what it is. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. Oral questions. Member from Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and I will be pursuing this topic again apparently. My final question has to do with who is going to obtain the employment to build the road. The economic evaluation says that the Tlicho Region will be the contractors for this road, a road that's being built with public money, and so to what extent is the government putting in place measures that will ensure that despite the fact that people in Whati have a high unemployment rate that they will be prepared to take advantage of the road building jobs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Mr. Speaker, no decisions have been made on -- even if we were going to be building this road, we are still waiting to hear back from the Federal Government on infrastructure dollars of this road and when we receive those funds from the Federal Government, if we receive those funds from the Federal Government, how we proceed will be something that the department will have to look at in how we farm out this contract.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Colleagues, I'd like to draw your attention to the public in the gallery. We have Madam Jose Clermont, who is the Director General of College Nordique is here with us. She has been monitoring our budget debates and she'll be here during the deliberation of education, culture, and employment. Thanks for being here. Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife North.