

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 270-18(2): REFORM OF THE CANADA PENSION PLAN

June 23, 2016

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Finance. I read this week that all of the provinces have signed on to a reform of the Canada Pension Plan which will supplement benefits for workers who don't have corporate pension plans. All have signed on, I heard, with the exception of Manitoba and Quebec. I would like the Minister to say what position the GNWT took on the reform of the Canada Pension Plan. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Member is correct. There was, I think, eight of the ten jurisdictions that signed on to the enhancements to the Canada Pension Plan. One had to take it back to their government to have a conversation with them, and Quebec has their own Quebec pension plan. The Member's question is about what our position was. Unfortunately, we don't have a vote at the table. It is just the seven provinces. They allowed the ten provinces to have some input into this. I think it is two-thirds and the NWT, Nunavut, and Yukon don't have a vote at the table. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Finance Minister for that information. Does the GNWT have a voice at the table where the Minister is able to speak about this pension plan reform?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, we do have a voice at the table. Unfortunately, they came to us after we had a bit of a break, and a lot of the decisions were already made. We brought that to their attention and the Chair recognized, and he apologized, that was his fault, that he should have included the three territories in the pre-discussion leading up to the break where a lot of conversations took place. They recognize that. We made our point. They gave us an opportunity to speak afterwards, but by then a lot of the decision had already been made. We brought it to their attention, and we intend in the future to make sure our voice is heard.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. Can the Minister tell us what he said when he was called on to speak about this issue?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, I said how come you never let me speak before?

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No. Mr. Speaker, I did point out to the fact that while I appreciated the opportunity to have some input into this that I would have appreciated more of an opportunity to speak before we took a break where a lot of the discussion went on. I pointed out to the fact that we are facing some challenges up here. One of our biggest challenges, and one of my biggest priorities, was trying to put our people in the position where they are able to pay into CPP. And I spoke of the infrastructure part of it, and how if I know our people are paying into CPP, then I know they are working.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. And thank you to the Minister for that. That is my last question. What do you think the impact is or have you had any research done on the impact of the pension reform on employees and businesses in the NWT? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, there has been some preliminary work done as to what it may cost employees and employers across the country. We will do some work on our part, and seeing that this is an important issue, once we get that work done, I would be more than happy to offer a briefing to committee. I have to say this is an issue that is across the country --

my e-mails were actually jammed with about 5,000 e-mails from across the country. Must be doing a mass e-mailing project. Most of the e-mails you could tell weren't from the Northwest Territories. But we will do our work. I will share any information I have with committee.