

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 759-18(2): “A NEW DAY” MEN’S HEALING PROGRAM

May 26, 2017

MS. GREEN: Masi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice. The Department has advertised for a service provider for the revamped A New Day program, and, despite holding a bidders’ conference and then revising the RFP, none of the non-profits have submitted a proposal. At least one that was approached directly declined to take the program on. What is the Minister's understanding of what the problem is here? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, when we went out for proposals, we were hoping that there would be more of a response. There was a pre-bid meeting with various possible bidders, and unfortunately none of them, including the bidder currently holding the contract, decided to put in a bid. At that point, we started looking further afield and went out to NGOs. As I say, that is an ongoing process, and I am hoping that I will be able to give some good news about that in the next several weeks.

MS. GREEN: I did not hear an answer to my question in that response, so I am going to ask it again. I would like the Minister to tell us why he thinks nobody wants to run this program.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, I have no idea why the expected bidders did not bid. Perhaps the Member opposite should speak to them.

MS. GREEN: I think that was an invitation to join Cabinet. I will take it.

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MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, the Standing Committee on Social Development was briefed on this RFP in January, and we flagged some problems at that time, which the department then ignored. So they put out a completely unpalatable RFP, patently unpalatable. Nobody has bid on it. Is the Minister prepared to work with the Coalition Against Family Violence to revamp the revamp so that this program has someone who wants to offer it?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As mentioned previously, Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with an NGO that has expressed an interest. We are hoping that things will work out well. As I mentioned earlier, the program has not been significantly altered, in our view. Some improvements were made as a result of the evidence that we received in the report which I have referred to earlier. So, I want to see how the negotiations with that NGO or another NGO work out over the next few weeks. If that does not work out, we will have to reconsider.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, which brings me to my last point. We stand to lose the knowledge and skills of the current course providers if there is an interruption of service, and, inevitably, this process will not be ready for the 1st of July, so will the Minister extend the current program funding? All that is required is to sign the contract. The money is already in place. Will the Minister do that to help victims of family violence? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned, I am optimistic that we will be able to enter into a contract with an NGO. There are always costs involved in these types of programs. The money, as the Member opposite has pointed out, is there. As I mentioned earlier, we have spent well over a million dollars on this. I may have overstated the number of graduates; there are only 21, actually. But, as I say, I am optimistic that we will have an NGO that will accept the terms and conditions of the RFP. Again, the changes made to the program were evidence-based on the New Day Healing Program evaluation report tabled in this House, so, again, I am optimistic that we will have a contractor by July 1st. Thank you...

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