

**ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

**QUESTION 857-18(2):  
ANTI-POVERTY ACTION PLAN AND INITIATIVES**

**September 22, 2017**

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Anti-Poverty Strategy. As I have frequently pointed out, along with the NGOs, the first step in eliminating poverty is to measure it. We need to identify a set of indicators to measure income and the effects of poverty, such as use of emergency housing, food banks, and so on. Will the Minister commit to begin the formal collection and assembly of this kind of data in partnership with the Bureau of Statistics? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Health and Social Services.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Territorial Anti-Poverty Action Plan included a commitment to monitoring and reporting. It recognized that there are many partners involved in the collaborative framework and that each partner would be responsible for monitoring and reporting on their own actions. However, the GNWT did commit to a number of things. One of those was compiling a set of broad social indicators that identify those factors associated with poverty, its causes and effects, and developing a schedule for reporting on them.

Mr. Speaker, during the last Anti-Poverty Roundtable held in Inuvik, a large number of indicators were discussed at length by the attendees, and the advisory committee took all that information they compiled and provided some advice and direction to the government on the establishment of some performance measures of poverty in the Northwest Territories. These measures are now being reported by the NWT Bureau of Statistics and collected by them, as well.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister. It is good to hear that there is some work going on in this area. Will the Minister further compile this information into a sort of annual report and release it at the Anti-Poverty Roundtable in November in Norman Wells?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** This is obviously an ongoing discussion. The Anti-Poverty Roundtable is an important opportunity for the GNWT and stakeholders to get together to talk about progress, and it is my understanding that that information is intended to be shared with the individuals at the roundtable. We are also working with our stakeholders. We have a \$1-million anti-poverty fund that we provide to different stakeholders. Many of them are providing reports on the work they are doing. We are still working with others to make sure that they are providing some evaluation work on the reports. We are hoping to have that information, as much as possible, available for further discussion and insight from the roundtable.

**MS. GREEN:** The Minister has anticipated my next question, but I am going to ask it anyway because it is a little more detailed. In the last budget, as the Minister said, the Anti-Poverty Fund went up to \$1 million, but, up to this point, there has been no effort to

evaluate the effectiveness of that spending, so I am wondering if the Minister could produce an annual report that once again would come out to coincide with the roundtable. I need to emphasize this very strongly, to evaluate without creating a large burden on the reporting agencies to carry out, so some kind of reporting but that is not onerous.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Compiling an annual report on the specific achievements in the plan is something that we are currently working on. This includes projects funded through the Anti-Poverty Fund through the annual roundtable. We have reported back to the roundtable every year on which projects are funded. We have not yet reached the point where every funded project, as I have indicated, produces a report, although I would like to confirm that many, many of them in fact do. Staff continue to work with funded projects on this component, and that is getting an evaluation of the individual projects, recognizing that some of them are small and that, as the Member said, we do not want to create an overly burdensome process that actually makes it more difficult for them to do the valuable work that they are doing.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Minister is aware that a \$1 million Anti-Poverty Fund is a start, but will not provide a systemic fix to poverty, so I am wondering, fuelled with the information he is collecting on the outcome of the different kinds of measurements, whether he is in fact willing to look at building on the work of some of the most successful programs through other programs or adjustments to other funding streams outside of the anti-poverty fund. Thank you.

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** The Anti-Poverty Fund is just, I think, one opportunity presented to us to help combat poverty in the Northwest Territories. The Housing Corporation is doing a significant amount of work to support safe and affordable housing. Education is doing work to renew the education system in the Northwest Territories to ensure that our children have the best opportunities moving forward. Health and Social Services is working on a continuing-care action plan. Education is working on an income assistance to make improvements there, to help increase affordability and sustainability throughout the Northwest Territories.

These are all important initiatives, which is one of the reasons I think, as the Member has indicated, it is incredibly important that we continue to renew the living document which is the GNWT Action Plan on Poverty. The anti-poverty working group actually met this week and talked about next steps and how we move forward to renew and re-create and grow the current GNWT action plan. The intention now is to move forward with a renewal of that GNWT action plan, highlighting all the important work that has been done but also targeting future work. The advisory group is going to meet after the Anti-Poverty Roundtable up in Norman Wells to begin planning for that process of renewing the GNWT action plan. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.