

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

**QUESTION 893-18(2):  
YELLOWKNIFE TEN-YEAR PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS**

**September 27, 2017**

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister responsible for Homelessness. Yellowknife has the largest homeless population in the Northwest Territories, and the city's 10-year plan to end homelessness provides an action plan to eliminate this problem. Will the Minister prepare a formal response to the plan, and release this response publicly when available? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister responsible for Homelessness.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have to give some thought to actually releasing a public statement on the plan, but I can say in the House here that the plan was actually a great joy to read. Dr. Alana Turner, who wrote the plan, actually backed up everything that I have been saying for the last two years, that we need a continuum of support, that this is not just one strategy will fix all. A lot of her plan actually was very complementary to my own personal beliefs based on my expertise in dealing with homelessness by working with homeless people for the last 20 years. I have also been in contact with the City of Yellowknife on this issue, and have agreed to work with the City of Yellowknife on this issue. I will have to give some more thought whether I do it as a public announcement, more than what I am doing just now in the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for her response. I understand that she is very engaged with this issue, and I am glad that she supports the approach that the report has taken.

One of the findings of the report is that it costs more to manage homelessness than to eliminate it. I am wondering if the Minister agrees with that statement.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I absolutely agree with the statement that it takes more to manage homelessness than it does to address it before people become homeless. That is why the Housing Corporation last year spent \$132 million, \$70 million coming from the Government of the Northwest Territories, \$35 million coming from the federal government, and \$30 million actually coming from the low rents for the accommodations that we have. We spend a lot of money to try to deal with not only homelessness, but homelessness is housing, so to deal with housing.

**MS. GREEN:** I think the key distinction here is between homelessness and housing. I know that the NWT Housing Corporation funds public housing throughout the Northwest Territories, and that there are some pots of money that go to the shelters. I think that what I am asking about here is whether the Minister will work to a more comprehensive response as it relates to the territorial problem that exists in Yellowknife. The plan calls on all the orders of government, that is, Indigenous, territorial, and federal, to work

together to create this commission that will work on implementing this plan. Is the Minister planning to take part in this opportunity?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** As stated earlier, the City of Yellowknife has approached me. When the 10-year plan was developed, they came in and we had a meeting. We did talk about the Homeless Commission, and the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation, myself, and/or the president, Tom Williams, have agreed to take part in this Homelessness Commission on a quarterly basis.

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

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That is good news. I think high-level leadership on this issue is very important to the implementation of the plan.

My final question has to do more with housing than homelessness. The report concludes that while overcrowded and substandard housing persists, people will continue to migrate to urban centres. Does the Minister agree with this conclusion, and is it on her radar to address the core need in housing? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** In regards to homelessness, I do recognize that it is a territorial issue. I have known that for a long time, and the MLA is correct. The majority of people actually who are in our capital city are not from the capital. They are from the communities.

To that effect, I have been providing a lot of support. Not only am I funding the Housing First initiative in Yellowknife, we are doing shelters in four communities coming up. We have a homeless shelter coming into Aklavik, one coming into Behchoko, one coming into Fort Simpson, and the newest one is Fort Good Hope. My goal is, like I said at the beginning of this Assembly, that I would hopefully have a homeless shelter in every region throughout the Northwest Territories, because people do better when they are around their families. Wellness is all about having social supports, and the major part of social supports is not government programs. It is family and community. We need to focus our efforts in putting homes and shelters into the communities so that people all through the Northwest Territories have options, and they can seek out wellness after they have actually been housed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.