

MEMBER STATEMENT JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

STATUS OF GOVERNMENT LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES

October 20, 2017

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to share my dismay with the glacial pace with which Cabinet is advancing legislation during this 18th Assembly. The pace is so slow that we have no hope of accomplishing all of the proposed legislative initiatives that we inherited from the 17th Assembly and those that come from our mandate.

Mr. Speaker, reviewing, debating, and approving legislation is one of our most fundamental tasks as Members. It is our responsibility to write laws that respond to the needs of residents and to provide them with good governance.

At this midway point of our term, we have passed 33 bills. Half of them are about money, including appropriations and supplementary appropriations for both the operations and capital budgets. Of the other half, most bills were small in scope, where a tweak or an update was required to existing legislation. In two years, in my estimation, we have dealt with only five bills with any substance that were not mandatory money bills. There has been less legislation passed in the first two years of this Assembly than in either the 16th or 17th Assemblies.

Mr. Speaker, I had hoped the government would pick up the pace as this third session of the Assembly gets under way, but that is not happening. Just one non-money bill has been introduced.

It is not as if there is no need for new legislation. There is work under way on the new Mineral Resources Act. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs outlined an ambitious legislative agenda earlier this month, including replacing the Civil Emergency Measures Act, updating the Fire Prevention Act, and amending the Cities, Towns, and Villages Act, but we have yet to see this legislation. The Minister of Environment and Natural Resources told us earlier this month there are four pieces of legislation he would like to update, including the Forest Management Act and the Waters Act, but again, we have nothing in hand today to review. Our mandate commits us to closing our term with an Ombudsman Act in place. The point is that every department has a list of legislation it plans to introduce during this 18th Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, we are about to begin a three-and-a-half-month recess with only one bill to review. Next year, if everything on the legislative agenda comes to fruition, the various standing committees will be hard-pressed to keep up. In fact, as I have said earlier, it is impossible for us to complete all the legislative initiatives government is contemplating at the pace it is moving.

I will have questions for the Premier about our progress through the legislative agenda. Mahsi.