

**JULIE GREEN—MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**  
**Supplementary Appropriations Bill**  
**Committee of the Whole—2018-2019 Operating Budget Review**  
**Early Learning and Childcare Agreement**  
**March 13, 2018**

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, my first question relates to page number 4. Under education and culture, there is a new expenditure of \$2,015,000. Could the Minister please tell us exactly what this money is going to be used for? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The GNWT recently signed an early learning and childcare agreement with the federal government that provides funding over a number of years. I believe it is a 10-year agreement. There are a variety of activities to support early childhood operators under that contribution.

The first \$2 million in the first year, there are some additional positions that are being added to help support the work with the various childcare operators, as well as some other activities that are included in there as well. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, it's my understanding that there are three new positions, and obviously they wouldn't be worth \$2 million, so what is the balance of this fund being used for? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Stewart.

**MR. STEWART:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. A couple of the items that are included under the activities that are going on: professional development and training, to support training for licensed childcare centre based early childhood development programs; cultural resource development in distribution to some of the centres; supporting some additional post-secondary training for early childhood workers; scholarships that are provided to support students who are enrolled in early childhood programs; some health and safety funding; and then some additional grabs for equipment and those sorts of things for childcare operators. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. Stewart. Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I recognize that this is not the deputy minister's department, but it was my understanding that this money was earmarked for the availability and affordability of childcare. How does this expenditure relate to those mandate goals? Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Ms. Green. Minister McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, as the Member pointed out before, the money is for the first year of this program, so this is what the money has been expended for this year and the subsequent years that are coming up, and the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment has assured me that he would be able

to provide a further detail and a briefing to social programs. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister McLeod. Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Yes, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am highly unhappy that we are being asked to authorize an expenditure for which we do not have a plan, despite the fact that a bilateral agreement has been signed. The Minister has been holding out on us in sharing this information, and now we know why. The spending that he contemplates does not further the mandate objective, and doesn't do anything about availability or affordability of childcare. So now that we have this information in public, I will have questions for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment tomorrow. In the meantime, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance what precedent there is for asking Members to approve a budget for which there is no plan. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Ms. Green. Mr. Moses.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to confirm there is a plan in place with this early learning funding. I can't share the full details until announcement has been signed with the Government of Canada. We are waiting for them to make that announcement. I will be more than happy and willing to sit down with committee and go through the details of the accessibility, the high quality of programs that are going to be earmarked with this \$2 million for the 2017 year. As I mentioned in the House, I would be more than willing to come before committee and share the details of that plan. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Moses. Ms. Green.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, I am not satisfied with that response. We have asked the Minister continuously over not just weeks, but months, to share the details of this plan with us in confidence as the Standing Committee on Social Development. He has consistently refused to do that, and that's in spite of the fact that the Regular Members have received details of other federal governments' funding prior to an announcement.

This is strictly a stalling tactic by the Minister to avoid any accountability on the way that he is envisioning to spend this money. From what the deputy minister of Finance has just told us, this in no way addresses availability and affordable of childcare. I am very disappointed, and there is no reason for us to be put in this position of approving money for which we have no plan. That's not a question. That's a rant. Thank you.