

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 287-18(3): PRIORITIES FOR HOUSING

May 24, 2018

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I stated my priorities for housing in Yellowknife Centre, with its long waiting lists for families and senior housing and also unaffordable private market rentals. I'd now like to hear from the Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation and Homelessness what his priorities are. Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister responsible for the NWT Housing Corporation.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned in answering some of the core housing needs with a previous Member, we want to continue focusing and supporting those programs, supporting our LHOs, working with our stakeholders, our community governments, our Indigenous governments, to address the core housing needs across not only just here in Yellowknife, but right across the Northwest Territories. We do have high waiting lists for people trying to get into housing. We do have a lot of housing units that need to be retrofitted, upgraded; some of them are ending their years of life. We also need to focus and work with our federal government in making sure that we work on rectifying some of the shortages that we had with the Northern Housing Strategy. So there are a few priorities in there. I'm willing to work with Members, work with our Indigenous governments, our community governments, to address the core housing need. We have about a year and a half left in this government, and we have to focus on making sure that our residents have safe and affordable housing units. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: It's said that, if everything is a priority, nothing is a priority. What I'm hearing here is that the list is just unmanageable in terms of actually getting anything done, so I'm going to zero in on a couple of specific things. What is the Minister's plan to reduce invisible homelessness among families by extending the territorial government's Housing First funding to them?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I mentioned earlier, as well, we do have the Community Housing Support Initiative, as well as the Rent Supplement Program, a lot of work that the Housing Corporation has done over this government to address those needs, and working with the NGOs, and giving them some of the rent supplements so they can help work with us to house and address some of these housing concerns that the Member has mentioned.

MS. GREEN: I'm going to repeat my question. The question is about extending the Housing First Program to homeless families in Yellowknife. Will the Minister provide that funding?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: We did see some really good results out of the Housing First Program, and working with the City of Yellowknife, as well as the Yellowknife Women's Society, to address these housing needs, and we will continue to work with them. We have to make sure that we also secure funding from our federal counterparts to address

housing needs right across the Northwest Territories, and looking at that model and trying to get that model out into some of our regional centres, where we also see very high housing waiting lists, as well as homelessness in some of our region national centres, taking that model that the Member has mentioned and seeing how we can adjust it to the regional centres and even perhaps some of our small communities. Yes, we will continue to work with our stakeholders on how to address that funding, and also with the federal government to increase our funding.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have a family of six living in a bachelor apartment. They've been there for three years. What is the Minister going to be able to do to help them, now? Thank you.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As I mentioned, we do have the Rent Supplement Program that we help with our families that are in need. We also have programs through EC and E in terms of income support. We do know that there are a lot of NGOs that do a lot of great work, working with us to address some of the core housing needs across the Northwest Territories, and the Member mentions that we do have a family of six. In some of our small communities, where we don't even have housing, those numbers go up, and that's what we need to work on addressing right across the Northwest Territories. We do have high waiting lists for housing, and we need to make sure that priority is given where it's needed, and I want to work with the Members to work on adjusting those. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.