

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

**QUESTION 308-18(3): INUVIK TO TUKTOYAKTUK HIGHWAY**

**May 24, 2018**

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have some precise status questions for the Infrastructure Minister. The Minister told us the road was completed, the grand opening in November, but we also know the depth of the road embankment fill was reduced to cut costs and bring the project in on budget. Can the Minister then tell us why he announced the project was complete when clearly it wasn't? Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I spoke about the Tuktoyaktuk to Inuvik highway last week, we said the road was under substantial completion when we decided to open it in November. I don't have the exact percentage, but I believe it was probably roughly 95 to 96 per cent complete. Based on that and having a look at the situation, as I have stated in this House, about opening the ice road, we took advantage of the situation for the winter months to open this highway. We have had 60 to 70 visitors per day, as I have said in this House, with no issues. The communities of Tuktoyaktuk and Inuvik had an extra 45 days based on us opening that road. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** The government news release said that this was an all-weather road that was complete and would link Canada from coast to coast to coast. There was no hedging around of "it would be open some of the time" or that it was mostly complete. I would like the Minister to tell us what he thinks the impact of the current status of the road is having on tourist interest, the community grand opening planned for July, and the new business that we created to promote tourism.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** I don't think it is going to have an impact on tourism whatsoever. As the ferry situation is not even open yet, it has not impacted access to that road right now from southern Canada. The impact of the road closure right now is between the residents in Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk. They have been very receptive and understanding of the situation that we need to complete this road. The contractors are out there diligently doing their work along with our engineering people. We look forward to the road opening to the general public as soon as it is safe to do so.

**MS. GREEN:** My concern is that the inadequacy of the construction will now be labelled "maintenance" or "repair." Will the Minister tell us the amount of projected maintenance costs in this first season, and commit to reporting on the actual costs at freeze-up?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** I can see if we can pull those numbers together. As all Members know, we are updating all Members on this tomorrow after the rise of the House, and I will see if I can pull together the numbers around those questions at the time.

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

**MS. GREEN:** I appreciate the Minister's commitment to do that. As I have said in my statement, our record of bringing these big construction projects in on time and on budget hasn't been great. Deh Cho bridge, fibre optic line, and now the Tuktoyaktuk road. My more general question is: what evaluation of the project planning, budgeting, execution, and performance is taking place in the Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk highway, and how are we carrying these lessons forward to the other road projects now under consideration? Mahsi.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As with any of these large projects taking place in the Northwest Territories, be it our own projects or P3 projects, there is something always to be learned. There is something to be learned on everyday-to-day life, and these projects are no different. The one thing I suspect going forward on this, to make it quite clear, I suspect because this was a federally funded project by a significant amount, there is going to be some type of federal audit around this project, and we will gladly participate in that, and we will gladly share that with Members of the House if it is done. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.