

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 467-18(3): ADDRESSING RENTAL OFFICE DELAYS

October 29, 2018

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice. The Rental Office has made some positive changes in getting clients to the hearing stage, but the wait for written decisions often adds up to three months. The Rental Officer, in her most recent report, says, "Amending the Act to be consistent with Alberta's legislation would immediately reduce wait times for both hearing dates and issuance of orders. By releasing the time spent writing reasons for decision that have already been given orally at hearing, more time would be available to complete other duties." My question is: does the Minister agree with this assessment? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did have an opportunity to read that portion of the report. Clearly, we need to speed up the process. We are looking seriously at that recommendation. I note that, in many provinces, in fact, six, there is no requirement for written reasons for a decision. That would certainly speed up the process. We are looking seriously at that. It does seem to be a sensible suggestion. Thank you.

MS. GREEN: The Minister, of course, knows that the legislative calendar is now very full for the remainder of this Assembly. Work could be begun now, if not completed, by the end of this Assembly to move this issue forward. Will the Minister begin work to bring forward legislation to make the change suggested, specifically that written orders are discretionary?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Of course, there are a lot of other legislative initiatives facing us. We are reviewing this report and will be working on it and hope to bring forth something before the end of this Assembly, at least start that work.

MS. GREEN: I am pulling out my wish list. I got a yes, so I am going for it. There is hope. In the meantime, prior to the legislative change, can the Minister commit to providing more staff at the rental office so that the written orders can be made available sooner?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: We went out for an RFP for a deputy rental officer. That contract is being finalized. Hopefully, that will speed up the process.

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

MS. GREEN: Another yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Thank you to the Minister for that. My final question is: my constituent also had issues with the forms. Basically, she had to take a template from the office and recreate it on her computer. Can the Minister tell us what he is doing to bring forms for the rental office into this century? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you for the question. I haven't looked at the forms myself, but certainly I will have staff or myself look at them. If they need to be modernized,

perhaps we can provide some assistance in modernizing them. I realize many of the forms that are used in the judicial or semi- or quasi-judicial area are outdated and are in need of improvement. I am committing to look at those forms. Thank you.