

## ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

### QUESTION 481-18(3): CHILDCARE AGREEMENT

October 31, 2018

**MS. GREEN:** Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Can the Minister explain to us how spending the bulk of the federal contribution to childcare on professional development will make services more available and more affordable? Mahsi.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Providing professional development for daycare staff or for people who are looking into getting into the field is part of the solution to making childcare more affordable and more accessible. If we don't have qualified staff to provide the services, it is not accessible. We had people in childcare centres who don't have the qualifications. We are trying to improve them.

Our children are our most valuable resource. We need to provide the support so that they get the quality programming. We are providing the two-year early childhood development. It is going to be a diploma program. We are providing, with the federal government, up to 30 scholarships for people to get into that field. It is part of the answer. It is not the whole answer. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you to the Minister for that response. Can the Minister please tell us how she's going to make childcare more accessible and more affordable?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I have to give credit where credit was due. It was under the guidance of the previous Minister of Education, who did a great job actually of actually increasing the amounts that are paying for subsidies to childcare centres to actually provide services for children. That was a great move on his part. I really recognize that, and congratulate him very much.

The other thing we are doing is that in the Member's speech. We have 11 communities that don't even have childcare centres. Research says early intervention is the key. Out of those 11 communities, we are working diligently. We are trying to get as many of them as possible to actually open up a childcare centre, some kind of early childhood support for their children. We have made a little bit of progress. We are working right now. Out of those 11 only, we are working with Norman Wells and Enterprise, and we are hoping that they will have centres coming in within a short while. We know that we still have nine more communities after that to go, but they are totally on my radar, and I am trying my best, Mr. Speaker to try to support those communities so that they can have early intervention programming for their children.

**MS. GREEN:** I would like to ask the Minister why the mandate tracker says the commitment to creating an action plan on affordable and accessible daycare is fulfilled when we have a 100-person waiting list here in the Yellowknife daycare, and a month of daycare costs almost two weeks of minimum wages?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Earlier I had said, I need to give credit where credit is due, and I also have to take responsibility where responsibility is due. I did see that as it was fulfilled, and I am not okay with that. We are actually adjusting that. We will have a more complete plan.

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

**MS. GREEN:** That is welcome news, Mr. Speaker. I am looking forward to additional detail. In the meantime, I'm wondering when the Minister is planning to share the plan that's part of the Canada-NWT bilateral agreement, along with the information that substantiates the professional development being funded with the Standing Committee on Social Development? Thank you.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I didn't know, actually. I had made the assumption, a wrongful assumption, it looks like, that that was already shared with standing committee, so I will make a commitment that we will share that with standing committee at the earliest convenience. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.