

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 496-18(3): NEW GOVERNMENT BUILDING

November 1, 2018

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your patience. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Premier and Minister of Executive and Indigenous Affairs. The GNWT has invested millions of dollars to construct a new office building in my riding. The building has been open for several years, and it is called the New Government Building, or the NGB. Several constituents have approached me with names for this building. My question is: when will the Premier begin the process of finding a proper name for this building? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I kind of like that NGB name itself. Generally we respond to public interest, so if there is public interest to name the building, we have a government policy that focuses on two areas when it comes to naming of buildings. One aspect is how to set up a process that is fair and gives everybody who is interested in submitting a name an opportunity to do so. Also we have some criteria as to what types of names. For example, we are not going to name buildings after people who are alive. So that is the kind of criteria, but if there is any indication of public interest, we would be more than pleased to look at doing so.

MS. GREEN: I appreciate that answer. How does this process work in terms of getting these expressions of interest which I have received informally about finding a proper name into the process the Premier just described?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I am told that we are starting a process that will provide for the naming of the NGB building, and I think that will be out shortly. As I said, the authority to set up the process and approve the name of a new building lies with Cabinet, and I think we would want to make sure that the names that are submitted are respectful. I think in England, where they had a naming contest for a new boat, they came up with "Boaty McBoatface" or something like that, so we would want to try to come up with a fair process that comes up with a respectful name.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I can appreciate "Building McBuilding" would not be a great outcome of this process, but I do understand that there is some criteria. Other than the fact that the person cannot be alive, can the Premier tell us anything else about the criteria for naming?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We will circulate the policy for naming of buildings. I know there are NGB buildings in other communities, as well, so we will make sure that information is available. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the Premier for that. So does the Premier envision this process being complete in the life of this Assembly?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We have had a number of suggestions for naming of buildings, and so for that reason we came up with a government policy. The policy has a definition for an "office building." The definition is based on the purpose of the building. Some of the guidelines are: we need Cabinet approval; we will consider whether the proposed name reflects the historical, cultural, and geographical significance of the Northwest Territories; GNWT-owned office buildings may be named in honour of deceased persons who have made significant contributions to public life; and GNWT-owned office buildings will not be named in honour of living persons, as I said; and we may approve a public engagement process to solicit naming ideas for GNWT-owned office buildings. So we would endeavour to enter that process for the buildings that the Member has raised. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.