

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 621-18(3): WISE WOMEN AWARDS

February 26, 2019

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women. Last week the Minister confirmed that there won't be any Wise Women Awards this year on International Women's Day. She said the awards may take place in October. Can she confirm that having the awards in October depends on the success of the Status of Women Council's fundraising efforts? Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, recognizing that the Status of Women is not under my direction, I cannot. I've been told by the standing committee to be hands-off, so I'm respecting that direction. My understanding from the Status of Women, though, is that they are looking at doing it differently. Like I said last week, or the other day, and I agree with that, community people are very focused on community events. When we do the event, it has traditionally been in Yellowknife. We bring one person, a wise woman, from the communities, and an escort, but they don't get to be around their family and their friends. So the Status of Women, not myself, the Status of Women is looking at a new model where we actually provide the funding to communities so that they can provide those awards within their communities, so that it can become a community event versus a Yellowknife event. That is my understanding. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: My follow-up question is: who is going to pay for the new style of recognizing women?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Again, as I stated the other day in answering that question, the Status of Women Council has been successful in accessing -- one of the mines has given them, I believe, either \$8,000 or \$9,000, and then they are also eligible for at least \$5,000 through the Women's Initiative. That, in total, if I look at the lower of \$8,000, that's actually a total of \$13,000. If we were to honour four women, that would be probably about \$3,000 per community. Traditionally, throughout my years of being a Minister here and going to events, usually it's about \$500 that we give for a community feast, which leaves an extra \$2,500 for the community to use as they want. The extra \$1,000, because if we did four, four times three is \$12,000, the extra \$1,000 should be able to pay for the awards, the trophies that we give out, and any administration. So I do see it as doable. I think it would be cheaper, and I think it would be more effective and more within the spirit of the community to do it as they are looking at it.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. There were two points to the Wise Women Awards, in my mind, and I have a question related to each of them. First of all, the awards were the focal point of the Status of Women Council's celebration of International Women's Day on March 8th. Can the Minister tell us what events, activities, or projects her office is planning in conjunction with the council to commemorate and

promote this year's International Women's Day?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: I do not know, actually, what the Status of Women, the NWT Status of Women, is doing for International Day. I do know that I will be doing a speech in the House to recognize it. Other than that, I'm not sure, again, what the Status of Women will be doing, or if they are doing it. That is the direction for the Status of Women to do. It is not for me as the Minister to direct them on what to do.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The second point of the Wise Women's Awards was to acknowledge and promote women's leadership, and to me that is especially important, given our efforts to attract more women to political leadership in the NWT. Can the Minister tell us how she plans to acknowledge and promote women's leadership on an ongoing basis? Mahsi.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Again, that was one of the contentious issues that was brought, and that was why I came to standing committee, was when I had given a direction asking the NWT Status of Women to support me in having more women in the leadership. I was definitely told that that mandate is my mandate. It is not for the Status of Women to do, and that I need to do that. So what are we doing? We are doing the campaign schools. We're just finishing up the draft; I'll be sharing that fairly soon. We will be contracting with the Native Women's Association and the NWT Status of Women to actually do a pilot of those campaign schools. So I promote any campaign schools, any promotion of getting women in leadership, but that is what I am doing as the Minister responsible for Status of Women. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.