

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

QUESTION 639-18(3): PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE

February 26, 2019

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. My statement today was about responding to family violence, but my questions are for the Minister of Justice about preventing it. In her most recent report, the chief coroner recommended that there be a long-term sustained public awareness program on family and domestic violence available in all communities. I would like to ask the Minister: what action has been taken on the coroner's recommendation? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have looked at the coroner's report from several years ago and certainly noticed that there were recommendations with respect to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. As Members will know, the RCMP enter into agreements with local communities. I haven't reviewed those of late, but I know that those are important concerns, and it certainly is a concern of this government as we move ahead. That is certainly in our minds. I know that it is a priority for the RCMP, of course, the reduction of all kinds of violence, and that is also a priority for this Assembly. Thank you.

MS. GREEN: Just to clarify, the coroner's report that I am speaking about is the most recent one, dated 2017. These recommendations come from investigations into two domestic homicides that happened in the reporting period. The coroner's report stresses that public education is needed to raise awareness about the signs of abuse in communities so that people who are close to those who are at risk or who are abusive can intervene. My question again is: what action has been taken on this recommendation?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As I mentioned earlier, I have looked at and in fact have in front of me the coroner's report from 2017. It is a priority, of course, addressing this issue of family violence. It is a priority of the 18th Assembly, and we are developing a comprehensive approach to addressing family violence. The goal is to identify best practices, align existing GNWT work, and identify priority areas for investment over the coming decade. We have contracted Aurora Research Institute to identify best practices to prevent and reduce family violence. They will finish their work early in the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. There were some things there that I had not heard before. When can we expect, then, a more concerted effort to take those findings and make them into a more comprehensive public awareness campaign?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As I mentioned previously, we have contracted Aurora Research to identify best practices. That is the first phase of this work. The second phase will be a strategic stakeholder consultation on the results of the research, to have meaningful guidance to balanced, research-based evidence with front-line voices and

lived experience of Northerners. As I say, we have contracted Aurora Research to assist us. That is only the first step. The second step is action.

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

MS. GREEN: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Thanks again to the Minister for that. Mr. Speaker, there is no increase in the Justice budget for the next fiscal year in the line " Protection Against Family Violence." I am wondering at what point this initiative the Minister has spoken of will be operationalized in terms of assigning spending to it. Thank you.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As I mentioned, we expect the researchers will finish their work early in the 2019-2020 fiscal year. At that point, we should be able to give a better estimate as to when we can move forward to the second stage. Thank you.