

**ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE**

**QUESTON 706-18(3):  
FUNDING FOR HOUSING PROJECTS**

**QUESTION 711-18(3):  
DIVESTITURE OF PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS**

**May 23, 2019**

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. Let's start with the plan for spending the new National Housing Strategy money. When will that plan be available to the public? Thank you.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As committee is well aware, we have had discussions in committee on where we are with this funding. We are developing a three-year action plan, and we did say and committed that we would share that action plan with the committee. We can work on providing where we are with that action plan and the partnerships that we have with CMHC. As committee is aware, we did have some committee members come to Inuvik for the Housing Summit, and we did also hear other innovative ideas and other ways that we can address the housing issue in the Northwest Territories.

We will look at working with committee and give an update once this three-year action plan has been approved by the federal government, and we will share the final action plan with committee. I think that it is something that is going to be very important, transitioning into the next government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** I didn't hear any timing around that, but I heard some process responses. As we come to the end of this Assembly, my question for the Minister is whether any of the public housing waiting lists are shorter now than they were three years ago and whether, over these last four years, there has been any increase in the uptake in home ownership?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As the Member knows, and we did have a chat a little bit earlier, there has been an increase in terms of public housing. It could be due to the economy; we don't know. I know that people who go into market rental units do have to get on the waiting list for housing. We can get that information and share it with the Member, share it with committee, so that we can look at how we can address the issues.

One positive thing, Mr. Speaker, is that we are doing these community housing plans and that should look at the priorities for each community across the Northwest Territories. As the Member noted in her statement, she did also talk about the Community Housing Support initiative, the flexibility that we have around that program, and I do encourage all leadership, all groups who want to work on addressing housing

issues in their community, to reach out to us at the NWT Housing Corporation and come up with a plan.

**MS. GREEN:** A previous plan called Toward Level Ground set targets for the Housing Corporation to assist people with housing issues. The goal was to help 1,077 households and spend \$67 million. This plan is now in year three of three. Can the Minister tell us whether this plan is going to meet those goals?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** The action plan in the document Toward Level Ground lists a number of housing programs and initiatives that I have brought up and that previous Housing Ministers have brought up during the life of this government to address the housing issues. We continue to work on that. We want to create partnerships with other leadership across the territories and our stakeholders and NGOs, and the GNWT has made a commitment to assist 250 core need households every year during this period. We have been meeting those targets, and we have been giving that information to committee. We will continue to do that work, and we will continue to keep committee and Members of this government apprised of how we are addressing the housing issues across the Northwest Territories.

I will repeat it again, Mr. Speaker: those community housing plans, and putting some of the onus and the accountability on our leadership and our community members to address that and work together, is something that we can look forward to, and obviously, the funding that we have been able to get from the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for his response. I look forward to some more detailed information about how the targets set in the Toward Level Ground report or plan have been met, because the Minister's math and the numbers set out in the plan don't match. I am hoping that, now that this program is in year three of three, he will be able to do some detailed reporting on the first two years. When can we expect that report? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** I know that we have been making some good changes within the NWT Housing Corporation. We will get that data for the Member, and we will actually share it with standing committee. I think it is something that we need to share right across the board. The Housing Summit that we just held in late April is something that was also brought up, and we really need to share and develop partnerships with our leadership in the communities and see how we can address the issues. We will get that information, that data, and share it with all Members and leadership. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **QUESTION 711-18(3): DIVESTITURE OF PUBLIC HOUSING UNITS**

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a few more questions for the Minister responsible for the Housing Corporation. I was interested to hear him tell my colleague, Mr. Beaulieu, that the Housing Corporation had divested of 183 units in the last three years. Could the Minister tell us, even in general terms, how many of those units were

sold to homeowners and how many of them were demolished? Thank you.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will have to get back to the Member on the detail. I did mention that, since April 1, 2016, there have been 183 units that we have demolished or sold. The detail that I can give the Member at this moment is that, during 2018-2019, we did sell 20 units and we demolished 20 more.

We are still continuing to work with communities and working with our residents in terms of finding ways that we can get them into a home ownership program or a lease-to-own program. I can get that detail from the Housing Corporation, and I will share it with the Member. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MS. GREEN:** I appreciate the detail that the Minister was able to provide. I think that he would agree with the statement that, with a waiting list of over 900 households, bringing more 20 more units into circulation, while is some progress, is clearly not enough progress.

Consistently, there has been a low uptake on housing for several reasons. A new one that I learned about at the Housing Summit is the high cost of insurance. Apparently, insurance companies are reluctant to insure homes in communities without fire departments and/or hydrants. My question for the Minister, then: is there anything that the Housing Corporation can do to help potential homeowners with the cost of insurance?

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As I mentioned, I was really appreciative that standing committee was able to attend the Housing Summit in Inuvik and listen to some of the concerns that were brought up, whether it was by industry, whether it was by leadership, or whether it was by non-government organizations. We do know that accessing home insurance can be challenging and very costly in some of our communities. However, I would just like Members, residents, and our groups to know that insurance costs are established by insurance providers, and we do not have the ability to adjust those rates, Mr. Speaker.

However, as noted in Inuvik, we will do some thorough research and look at the options that might be available to us and the resulting financial costs moving forward.

**MS. GREEN:** I recognize that insurance rates are set by the insurance industry, but one possibility that I would like to bring to the Minister's attention is a self-insurance scheme, where the insurance is provided by the Government of the Northwest Territories to the homeowners so that it is more affordable to them and it meets the goal of moving people who can afford to get out of public housing out of public housing.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** As I mentioned in the last answer, we are going to look at and do some research on the options that would be available. Once we look at those options and do the research, we would share it with standing committee, and we would share it with Members.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

**MS. GREEN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Once again, I hope that the research will include a self-insurance option. Could the Minister tell us when we could see the results of this research? When does he plan to have that completed? Thank you.

**HON. ALFRED MOSES:** At this time, I don't have a timeline. Coming out of the Housing Summit, we are developing a report that we are going to share with our leadership, that we are going to share with our stakeholders, and that we are going to work with people who came to the Housing Summit. That is a priority, everything that came out of the Housing Summit, where we had leaders from 24 of our communities across the Northwest Territories. We want to make sure that we know what the next steps are. At this moment, we don't have a timeline, but we will look into that research. That is something that we are committed to, but our staff also needs to work on developing the programs and promote the programs.

As I mentioned, we had six community housing plans as a goal, and now we have 10 communities that we are working with. After the summit, I am sure that we are going to be expecting more communities come and reach out to the Housing Corporation to do more work. Once we get that information, we will share it with standing committee and Members, but right now, I don't have a timeline. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.