

ORAL QUESTIONS – JULIE GREEN MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

NWT HOUSING CRISIS

DEC 11, 2019

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My questions are for the Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation. As I mentioned in my statement, residents of Yellowknife and in communities across the NWT are facing what I describe as a housing crisis. Housing problems have more than doubled in the last five years. Can the Minister tell us whether she considers the current situation a crisis? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member. Minister responsible for the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Thank you for your comments, Member. With the housing crisis, it's not acceptable for the Northwest Territories. Like I said before, I do come from a smaller community. I come from a smaller area. I do see the homelessness, and I see how it affects our people at the grassroots level. I will be working very closely with my department and looking at the programs that are now existing, and working towards improvement. Thank you.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that answer. I want her to appreciate that we have significant housing problems in Yellowknife, as well as in the small communities. My question for her is: what specific action is she going to take to address the escalating housing problems identified in the 2019 survey?

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Going forward, I know that there are reports that have been completed in the past, already. I have not had the chance to review them, but I would like to exercise them in getting new results and new ideas. I do come to the department with fresh eyes, and I am looking forward to looking at the Northwest Territories and meeting their needs as a territory.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that response. I'd like the Minister to answer whether she is prepared to revisit the Housing Corporation's decision not to add any more units to its inventory to meet the waiting list of over 900 households.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Thank you, Member. I would like to revisit the number of units that are existing for the Northwest Territories, but also we are in a housing crisis, as well, and we do need new allocated units and new public units in the Northwest Territories. I am wanting to go ahead and review what we actually have on the ground and look at the inventory.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. That was a positive response from the Minister, and I appreciate that. My final question is whether the Minister will be lobbying her colleagues for a greater investment in housing in the next budget. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. PAULIE CHINNA: Yes, we will be lobbying.