

**ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**QUESTION 61-19(2): NWT SINGLE-WINDOW SERVICE CENTRES**

**February 12, 202**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My statement earlier today raised the issue of completing our network of single-service window centres across the entire NWT. Would the Minister of executive and intergovernmental affairs briefly describe the services performed at these centres and how effective they have been in increasing access to government programs and services? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Honourable Premier.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Actually, the government service officers in the single-service window centres are actually a real success in the smaller communities, in all honesty. In the last 10 years, we have had over 70,000 people use that service in the small communities. What do they do there? Because in the small communities we don't have the big government buildings like we do in the regional centres or like here in our capital city, often they have people who fly in from different regions. A worker will fly in once or twice a month or whatever. Like we have heard many times in questions in the House, people have income support; they need housing; they need all kinds of services, medical access, et cetera. The government service officers' task, these single-service windows, is to actually be there as that connecting point so that people know what programs are out there, how they can get the forms in, et cetera. The other thing that I am really proud of that they do is actually go into elders' homes. They help them in Indigenous languages for people who struggle with English as a second language. That is phenomenal. That is something that we couldn't pay enough for. Basically, in a nutshell, I am a strong advocate. I think they are a great service in the small communities, and it is one way to help people have access to our programs and services in a timely manner. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that great promotion of the hard work that our GSOs do, and I recognize that, as well. We just need to complete the network. I want to ask the Minister whether there is a plan to actually complete the network for all of our communities, including the regional centres, and, if not, why?

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** I don't know if there is actually a laid-out plan. I could do a plan that says we have so many small communities and this is how many we have and this is how many I want to get to. I am more big on getting the work done. I do know that we are still working on it. The next one will be going into the Deh Cho region. My commitment is, because it is a great program, I think that we need to make sure that we

try to get them in every single small community before we even start talking about regional centres or the capital city. I know people would like it everywhere. The reality is that the whole point was to be able to have access to services and programs. That is what my goal will be, to make sure all the small communities are covered first.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. I, too, agree that we want to complete this network, probably with an emphasis on small communities, but Yellowknife actually has the largest Indigenous population of any communities in the Northwest Territories. There are a lot of unilingual speakers right here in Yellowknife, as well. We have to find a way to provide services for them. There is already a model for how we could do some of the regional centres. We have the Services TNO office here in Yellowknife. I want to ask the Minister whether she can tell us whether there has been an evaluation of the services provided through Services TNO and whether this can serve as a model for all regional centres.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** Yes. I believe that there was an evaluation done. The 2018-2019 service evaluation was conducted. It was shown to be very positive; 352 requests came through in one year from April 1, 2018, to March 31, 2019, requests in French. The difference with that model is that model is actually based in Yellowknife and provides services to the whole Northwest Territories. The single-service window model is specifically each small community having access to somebody where they can walk in. Not everyone in small communities has Internet. Maybe some of them don't even have cell phones. It is about being accessible on the ground for them. That is a different model. It is the same concept but a different model.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Honourable Premier. Final supplementary, Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. There are actually a lot of people in Yellowknife who don't have access to a computer or cellphone, either. We have got to find ways to reach out to them and provide the service. Here is another idea I would like to toss the Minister's way. We have a great Service Canada storefront operation here in Yellowknife. I have used it myself for passport applications. It would seem to make sense that maybe there is a way to get that office to offer information about GNWT services. Would the Minister commit to investigating whether the Service Canada office in Yellowknife could offer access to GNWT services? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE:** At this point, we haven't actually thought about putting a single-service window in Yellowknife. I have no problem asking Service Canada if

they would consider keeping some of our brochures. I am not sure if I would want to go to the point of asking them to keep all of our application forms, the information, all of the different aspects of every department because, even though people in Yellowknife or in the major centres may not have access to Internet or telephone, there is access to government buildings here that they don't have in the smaller communities. My priority will be on the small communities first. After that, I am open to new ideas. I do think that we need to have more interest, but my priority at this point is making sure that the small communities where they have no government offices have single-service windows. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.