

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

QUESTION 8-18(2): MACKENZIE GAS PROJECT SUNSET EXTENSION

February 18, 2016

MR. O'REILLY: The GNWT filed a letter of support earlier this week on February 15, 2016 with the National Energy Board and the Office of the Regulator of Oil and Gas Operations for a seven-year extension to the certificate for a Mackenzie gas pipeline. Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment confirm that there was no consultation with regular MLAs on the GNWT position? Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, Mr. McLeod.

HON. ROBERT R. MCLEOD: I can confirm that the Mackenzie Valley gas project has been a priority for not only the 16th Legislative Assembly, but the 17th Legislative Assembly. With regards to the Mackenzie Gas Project sunset extension, we do have a protocol for priorities that transcend from one Legislative Assembly to another, and we followed that protocol.

MR. O'REILLY: I do not wish to debate the merits of whether the certificate should be extended or not. The issue is how and when Cabinet will consult with regular MLAs before major decisions are made. Can the Minister explain to this House how and when the Executive intends to consult regular MLAs on matters before decisions are made?

HON. ROBERT R. MCLEOD: We have a process convention that has been agreed to on how we work and interact with the standing committees, and we would be very pleased to review it and update with the standing committees.

MR. O'REILLY: Now that the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment has intervened to support the extension of the Mackenzie Gas Project certificate with the Office of the Regulator of Oil and Gas Operations, how does the Minister see himself carrying out his regulatory role so as to avoid an apprehension of bias?

HON. ROBERT R. MCLEOD: I will avoid that by having another Minister assume the responsibilities as the oil and gas regulator. It has been assumed by Minister Louis Sebert.

MR. SPEAKER: Final, short supplementary, Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: That's a piece of good news. I find out about it in the House, but thank you. Will the Minister commit to a public review of the structure and reporting relationships of the Office of the Regulator of Oil and Gas Operations so as to avoid a conflict of interest between GNWT roles as intervenor and regulator?

HON. MR. ROBERT R. MCLEOD: I have always said that with devolution we will devolve and evolve, and we will do exactly that.