

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

TRIBUTE TO THE NORTHERN JOURNAL

February 25, 2016

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to salute the tremendous public service performed by the Northern Journal over many years. It may seem odd that a Yellowknife MLA is making a statement on the publication based in Fort Smith, but I have no hesitation whatsoever in saluting this newspaper as a standard of excellence in the Northwest Territories, setting an example for all other media to follow.

The Northern Journal was founded in 1977 by Don Jaque as the Slave River Journal. It has been a family affair with his wife Sandra and has spawned some of the best journalists we have had, including Meagan Wohlberg, Craig Gilbert, and more.

The newspaper has undertaken investigative journalism from an objective public policy perspective for decades, and I cannot say enough good things about it.

It was very sad news I heard last week that the publisher has announced that he intends to close down the Northern Journal unless a buyer is found. I hope our more enterprising journalists will have a good look at the opportunity to take over the Northern Journal and build on its solid foundation and reputation.

If the Northern Journal does not find a new life, it will fall into an unfortunate trend around the world where the print media is being replaced by the Internet and social media. Call me old-school, but I still like to hold a newspaper in my hands, and I love the Northern Journal.

I wish to sincerely thank Don and Sandra Jaque for devoting a large part of their adult lives to better informing Northwest Territories' residents about the key issues of the day. I believe I can say that all MLAs wish them all the best with their retirement and whatever challenges may lie ahead. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.