

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

QUESTION 75:18(2): NORTHERN POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

February 29, 2016

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le president. Earlier today we had an interesting public presentation from Dechinta today at the Standing Committee on Social Development. Then last week, as an Assembly, we adopted the Mandate for the Government of the Northwest Territories 2016-2019. One point in that document states that we should be refocusing support for post-secondary institutions in the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment tell this House what is meant by "refocusing support for post-secondary institutions in the Northwest Territories?" Merci, Monsieur le president.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member knows, we just had our mandate done last week. What it really means is we're just looking at post-secondary education and making sure we are providing the programs and that we are doing it right. As Members also know, we have a Skills 4 Success Initiative and next month we'll also be making public the Labour Market Information Report, so we want to reflect our programs to what is needed in the communities. We also want to make sure that we're aligning our post-secondary education with the vision and the priorities of the 18th Legislative Assembly moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and I appreciate the answer from the Minister.

We have a number of post-secondary institutions in the Northwest Territories, including Aurora College, Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning and College nordique francophone. What role does the Minister see for each of these post-secondary institutions in the future? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Right now I believe that College nordique does offer diploma programs and that our department is working with them to look at possibly how we can work with Aurora College at the same time. I know Dechinta has been mentioned in this house on numerous occasions. They have a partnership with the University of Alberta where their students can possibly transfer to the University of Alberta.

Dechinta and College Nordique do not require any authority of an act to operate this way, and we do fund some of these institutions. Aside from College Nordique and Dechinta, we also do give some program dollars to other post-secondary institutions in the North. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Minister for his answer and we all understand that the Education Act allows for the granting of post-secondary education degrees, but can the Minister tell us which institutions in the Northwest Territories have such authority and for what types of degrees?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the Education Act, and I believe it's Section 130 that needs to be reviewed if anything needs to be changed with that. We have the Aurora College Act. That's the only institution I can think of that can give out degrees or diplomas. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Monsieur le president, and I want to thank the Minister again for his answer. Earlier today, though, I just spoke about how there are other post-secondary institutions here in the Northwest Territories, including Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning and College nordique francophone. Can the Minister tell this House whether he's prepared to enable these other institutions, Dechinta and College Nordique in particular, to grant degrees, and when does he believe such authority will be in place? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALBERT MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I mentioned, there do have to be some changes to one of our acts. Like I said, we have the Aurora College Act and then there's also—I'll just correct myself here, but it is Section 150 of the Education Act that provides "the university or degree-granting institute cannot be created or established in the Northwest Territories without the express authority of an Act." If those discussions need to be made right now, we just support them financially, and that's something that would need to be changed within that act if something were to move forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.