

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

QUESTION 94-18(2): FIRST MINISTERS MEETING IN VANCOUVER, BC

March 1, 2016

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, the Premier made a statement about a First Ministers' meeting that is happening in Vancouver. This is an important meeting that he is going to. It's the first time in six years that the First Ministers have actually gotten together, and I'm sure I can say on behalf of all the MLAs that we're really glad that he is going and it's an important meeting. I'm wondering if he can tell the House, though, how he will be guided by the recently amended and adopted the Mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories 2016-2019. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see the mandate that has been developed as our way forward and it will be incorporated into all of the mandate letters of all of the ministers. This will guide all of our discussions going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Premier for his response. I guess I was asking the question, though, in the context of this First Ministers' meeting in Vancouver that he is going down to. I am wondering if he has any specific asks or requests that he is going to be making at that meeting, and if he could share those with the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Members know, there premiers from all the provinces and territories in Canada will be there, as well as the Prime Minister of Canada. The first day will be a meeting with the leaders of three national Aboriginal organizations in Canada, and so those discussions will be primarily on climate change and the economy. The second day will be a First Ministers meeting between the Prime Minister and the 13 premiers of all of the provinces and territories. What I will be talking about is how climate change is affecting us in the Northwest Territories, we'll be talking on a number of issues, and how we can all work together to deal with the issue. There are a number of important issues will be discussed.

All of the provinces and territories are working on a Vancouver declaration, which will be in follow-up to a Quebec declaration that was discussed and issued earlier in the summer. I believe it was July or September. There was one meeting in Toronto of all the premiers, and there was another meeting in Quebec City. Those are the discussions that will be going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Premier again for his response. It sounds like climate change is going to be a major theme at this First Ministers' conference. I wonder if the Premier could make a commitment to report back to the Regular Members about what happens that the important meeting, and perhaps table a report in the House. Thank you.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I indicated to the Standing committee on Priorities and Planning, I will be pleased to report back. Some of the discussions are embargoed and are on a confidential basis, but I have no problem sharing it with the standing committee on that basis. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Mahsi. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Mahsi, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the Premier for that commitment. I look forward to the report. In his statement yesterday, the Premier said the Government of the Northwest Territories is also in the process of developing a strategy to ensure that the federal government understands territorial priorities and sets the ground work for active partnerships in areas of common interest. The key phrase in this is “developing a strategy.” I’m wondering if the Premier would make the commitment to consult with the Regular Members as he develops this strategy, to help better convey what our priorities are to the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: In the 17th Assembly, we developed a federal engagement strategy because we felt it was more effective and efficient if we had a very well-coordinated and limited number of asks, and I'm pleased to say that we were very successful in being able to advance our priorities with the federal government. We did seek input from the standing committee, and would be pleased to do that again.