

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE

Cabinet—MLA Claims Negotiating Committee

Committee of the Whole—2016-2017 Operating Budget Review

Dept. of Executive—June 2, 2016

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. So I've been in my position now since November 23rd, or whatever, and although we've had one, perhaps two, briefings on general negotiations, I don't recall actually seeing any sort of regular updates that are provided to Regular MLAs. Is there supposed to be some kind of regular report provided to Regular MLAs on negotiations? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. There was one on my desk, but I had to send it back for some corrections because I realize that, if it goes without corrections, it's brought to our attention very quickly. So you should be receiving it very shortly. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I look forward to getting an update, and I hope that they will start to come on a regular basis. I guess I'm very concerned about the inconsistent messaging and what seems to be a log jam emerging here within this building. As part of the mandate, we all agree that we were going to try to move this along. I heard promises from the Premier in his accepting his new position to try to move things forward. A new offer was to be put on the table with the Deh Cho within 90 days. There was supposed to be a joint Cabinet–Regular MLA committee set up, but I don't really understand what this new approach is. I don't have any updates. The joint committee is not established. There is not a new offer out on the table, at least according to the Deh Cho First Nations. There are some very inconsistent things going on here, and can the Minister provide some assurance that this is still a priority with this Government and that things are going to start moving? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, things are going to start moving. I should say that the draft terms of reference on the Cabinet Standing Committee, was sent to SCOP. We are waiting for feedback. As I said, there are three partners at the negotiating table. We have to make sure that -- I could have made offers a long time ago, but there's no sense making an offer if they're just going to turn around and refuse it, or turn it down. So we've had to work to make sure that we involved the federal government. We also involved the Aboriginal governments. As a matter of fact, I met with the Grand Chief of the Deh Cho First Nations a number of times. We met this morning. We are working things out. The regular reporting, the report will be out, and so we expect things to move forward and come together very soon, within the next few weeks. So thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the response from the Minister, but I guess I'm starting to sense a lot of frustration from this side of the House in the lack of progress on this part of our mandate. This side of the House is willing to work. We want to work on this and help the Cabinet start to move these things forward, but progress has been extremely slow, and I really look forward to a lot more progress on these files. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. More of a comment. Would the Premier like to respond?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chair. We've been elected for four years, and we're now six months into our term. One of my former colleagues would have translated that into days. Three and a half months, I'm not sure how many days, but I think we're going to get there. So thank you, Mr. Chair.