

**KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE**

**Support for Agriculture and NIFTI**

**Committee of the Whole—2016-2017 Operating Budget Review**

**Dept. of Industry, Tourism and Investment —June 16, 2016**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Okay. The Growing Forward Two funding, can anybody with the Minister or staff explain whether NIFTI, the Northern Farm Training Institute, actually got any support in 2015-16 and how much? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. And we are discussing pages 240 and 241. Minister McLeod.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. NIFTI did receive funding. The federal government provided \$2 million in funding through CanNor to undertake this project, and ITI contributed \$200,000. In addition to this funding, ITI has provided another \$120,000 in Growing Forward 2 and SEED funding directly to NIFTI since 2014. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. So NIFTI would continue to be eligible for Growing Forward Two funding and perhaps something under the Northern Food Development Program? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** That's correct, Mr. Chair, as long as there's funding available in those pots. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. So I'm just not quite sure how the funding works for these two programs. Is it distributed through the regions, the regional offices, or is it done through headquarters and how does an organization like NIFTI apply for this funding? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. All of the funding in those programs are in the regions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair, I appreciate the answer. I think that's part of the issue is, as I understand it from NIFTI's perspective, is that when they want to support work that's actually building capacity within the regions they have to make a whole bunch of different applications to different regional offices to support people coming in to their facility and getting training and then going back and building capacity in their own regions and communities. Is there any other kind of model or approach we could consider here to help support this organization? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The funding is in the region; we believe the regions know best who to support. There's a number of different models we can follow. We could centralize all the

money in Yellowknife and we can make those decisions, and I'm sure there's other models as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Look, I'm not suggesting that the money be centralized in Yellowknife but obviously if a small non-profit has to make a number of applications to different regions to support work and building capacity there that creates an administrative burden on a small NGO. So is this something that the department has considered and is there-- or what sort of solutions might there be? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. We think the current model works quite well. The region knows best who to support. The regions support individuals to attend NFTI. As I said, there's other models; we could centralize it in Hay River and have them provide all the funding. But we don't see it as a problem for having to apply to a number of different pots. Actually, I think it works quite well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Well, while the department may not see it as a problem as I understand from NFTI they do have a problem. They spend a lot of time and effort in trying to apply to the different regions for pots of money and there's some administrative burden involved in filling out different application forms, trying to talk to different regional offices about status of applications and so on. So I'm going to leave it at that, but I hope the department would try to find a way to make sure that we can better promote agriculture and support this institution in building capacity in the regions. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Would the Minister like to respond?

**HON. BOB MCLEOD:** Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess it's the first I heard that NFTI had some problems. We're prepared to go and talk to them. If applications are submitted on a timely basis there's usually no problem. But we'll follow up with NFTI and see exactly what the problem is then. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Minister. Anything further, Mr. O'Reilly?

**MR. O'REILLY:** No thanks, Mr. Chair, and I appreciate the commitment of the Minister to follow up with NFTI and try to find a way to streamline or improve support for agriculture. Thanks, Mr. Chair.