

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE

Thaidene Nene Park

Committee of the Whole—2016-2017 Operating Budget Review

Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources —June 9, 2016

MR. O'REILLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I did hear a couple remarks here that just started to set off some alarm bells for me. I think I heard the deputy minister say that they're going to reopen negotiations (on Thaidene Nene Park). So I'm hoping that we're not looking at the whole arrangement unraveling at this point though the territorial government wanting to make a bunch of significant changes. I know that some of the other parties to these negotiations have had significant amounts of time invested and energy, and commitments from third parties that are time-dependent. So I just get worried when I hear the words "reopen negotiations."

So perhaps we can just get a little bit of clarity here about what is actually taking place. Like, if we're reopening negotiations on the whole package, I'm more than a little concerned. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. A couple things I guess. We're not reopening negotiations. All what happened was this process was put on pause during the 17th Assembly for the election. What we're doing is going back through the process and bringing this back to open the box back up and essentially to get things going again. It's not like we're re-negotiating. What we negotiated already we're just -- the process was put on pause, and now we're re-engaging with the stakeholders. One thing I'd like to suggest maybe is we can offer a briefing to committee on this whole process and then everyone can ask as many questions as they want. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. Schumann. Any further questions, Mr. O'Reilly?

MR. O'REILLY: No. I do want to thank the Minister for that reassurance. If it's just re-commencing where we left off, I'm more comfortable with it. I think that invitation from Committee is probably on its way, may be on its way already, so I'll look forward to getting that briefing. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

One other question about this in general though, if I may. As part of this package on the Conservation Network Action Plan, I think that's what -- I don't know if I got the title right -- as part of that package, I guess we're looking at having an overall strategy for conservation areas throughout the Northwest Territories, and presumably part of that is going to be legislation and looking at our toolbox. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Mr. Schumann.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, it is. Thank you, Mr. Chair.