

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

911 EMERGENCY SERVICES

October 18, 2016

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I made a Member statement on 911 emergency services in this House on June 7th and asked some follow-up questions. I thought we were getting somewhere, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs committed to see whether Northwestel could change its current message when people dial that number to at least give the right telephone information rather than a simple recorded message about the absence of any service. The Minister also committed to look at a phased-in approach to implementation of 911.

Last week the new Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs tabled a written follow-up to these commitments. On the good side, the Minister's committed to advertise the fact that there is no 911 service in early 2017, and checked into the Anderson v. Bell court decision as a possible avenue for funding. She also indicated that the lack of 911 service has been brought to the attention of the federal government as a possible area of investment and said that a briefing would be offered to the Government Operations Committee.

However, the Minister also said, "In light of the GNWT current fiscal environment, 911 is not included in MACA's 2017/2018 business plan." To say I was disappointed would be an understatement.

What we have here is how the \$150 million reduction target has hamstrung Cabinet in introducing the most basic new service designed to protect lives and public safety that now exists in every other part of this country except Nunavut. To say we can't afford \$615,000 and \$266,000 a year afterwards is beyond belief, Mr. Speaker. Can we afford to continue to put our residents and visitors at risk and roll the dice in terms of liability from our failure to provide adequate services? I will have questions later today for the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.