

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

FUNDING FOR SENIORS SPORT AND RECREATION PROGRAMMING

October 27, 2016

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Recent proposals to transfer lottery administration to GNWT coffers have raised a number of questions regarding the future of support for sports and recreation. One critical part of this picture for me is the state of funding to better support seniors in staying active through sports. Funding for senior sports has fallen sharply in recent years.

Seniors' representatives who have been in touch with me indicate that the ability of seniors to participate in the national Canada 55+ Games has been severely curtailed. I'm told that Municipal and Community Affairs has been in touch with a seniors' sport and recreation representative and a proposal is under development to support sport and recreation activities for seniors. The Minister has reported to me that the department is working with organizations that currently provide sport and recreation programs to seniors to ensure that they provide the same or an increased level of programming in 2017-2018 and beyond. This would include programming through the Elders in Motion program and the Canada 55+ Games.

However, I'm told that MACA does not have any internal programs that specifically support sport and recreation for seniors. It doesn't seem that there will be any new external sources of funds for seniors' sports. Will the transfer of lottery funds into the GNWT allow for some sort of an investment in support of seniors' sports and recreation?

Finally, I'm told that MACA will also be consulting with seniors and elders to see what additional sport and recreation services might be provided through communities and sport and recreation organizations. That's good, but, without the dollars, the consultations will be less than productive.

I can't think of anything more obvious than the fact that active seniors are healthy seniors, which will save us big dollars in areas like healthcare for unhealthy seniors. Seniors' sports and recreation funding is a good investment in controlling healthcare costs, so how committed are we, Mr. Speaker? I'll have questions for the Minister and trust that the old mantra of tough fiscal times and the \$150-million reduction target will not be trotted out again. Merci, Mr. Speaker.