

**KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**Anti Poverty Fund**  
**Committee of the Whole—2017-2018 Operating Budget Review**  
**Dept. of Health and Social Services—February 9, 2017**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I am looking at page 168, the anti-poverty fund that is listed on this page. I am just wondering if I could confirm with the Minister that he is of the view that the money that is given out through this program is generally to NGOs and that NGOs make good use of this money and that we are getting really good value for the money that is spent there. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Member will notice that there is \$650,000, and \$75,000 goes to YK for day shelter and \$35,000 goes to Inuvik for day shelter, and that was a decision made in previous governments that we have continued to abide by. The other \$500,000 is distributed based on proposals submitted by different NGOs and other bodies across the Northwest Territories. In order to allocate those funds we put together an advisory committee who reviews all the applications for us and makes recommendations, which I share with committee before approving them. I am confident that the dollars are going out to the NGOs and to the applicants who are successful, but we need to do a better job of determining whether or not we are getting a big bang for our buck.

We have all talked about evaluation frameworks and making sure that we are seeing results. At the last anti-poverty meeting, we shared some possible evaluation indicators. There were a lot of suggestions for more, and there were some suggestions to take some of them off. We need to do a better job of identifying those indicators so that I can answer that question. I feel confident they are spending the money. I feel that each organization is certainly getting benefit. From a big picture point of view, it is hard to say without some indicators or evaluation mechanisms. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think I heard him say in there that there was value for money, but it was sort of a little bit longer answer than I had expected. Can the Minister tell me how over-subscribed this fund is in terms of the applications that are received? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The first year, we were pretty close to being almost exactly what was allocated, but since then we have been quite a bit lower. I think it is been about \$1.8 million on a \$500,000 package. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. So we get \$1.8 million in applications for a fund that is \$500,000. That, to me, sounds like a pretty good case for why we should increase the pot of money. I understand the Minister wants to develop some sort of an evaluation

framework, but I understood this evaluation framework was much broader than just looking at the value for this money that is invested. I had understood that the evaluation framework was really looking at: are we making progress towards eliminating poverty? Maybe the Minister can help me understand this. Thanks.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Can the Minister clarify?

**HON. GLEN ABERNETHY:** Thank you. No, the evaluation framework is intended to help us identify whether or not we are making progress in poverty. It is not just the \$500,000, absolutely not. We are doing things through income support, through housing. There are five main pillars that we are trying to address under poverty, so it is not just this fund.

You know, we have some criteria that we ask for to ensure that the groups that are getting the money are spending the money, but I take your point. We put this out, and there is growing interest, and we will continue to release the dollars. The \$500,000 was always intended to help people leverage more money, and in many cases it has helped individuals leverage more money.

I have had some individuals -- Ms. Green is an example -- say we have to look differently at how we are allocating these monies. Maybe we should block-fund some of the pillars or guarantee certain parts as larger sums and smaller sums. I have committed to looking at that; probably not for this go-around, because we have already issued the call with the parameters.

I am going to ask the advisory committee to provide me with some insight on how to distribute these monies in the future before we do a future call, based on the types of things that Ms. Green has mentioned to me in the past. It is a great fund, and it is certainly well-subscribed, as are many of the programs available through the GNWT. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, we've got an over-subscribed fund. It is doing great things. We are going to be developing a broader evaluation system for whether we are making progress on poverty overall, not just money invested into this fund. I think I have made the case and the Minister has helped me make the case for putting more money into the fund, period. Thank you.