

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

QUESTION 884-18(2): ARCTIC ENERGY ALLIANCE PROGRAMS

September 26, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure, who is also responsible for the Arctic Energy Lines. As I said in my statement, when program funds run out before the end of the first quarter, we obviously have a good program that needs to be better resourced.

As Regular MLAs, we had requested during the last budget more money for the alliance. Now that our prediction of inadequate funds has come true, can the Minister re-profile funds so the alliance can approve the applicants on its waiting list and publicize the availability of programs to those who did not bother to apply? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Arctic Energy Alliance is a great organization that is helping us particularly move forward now with the mandate of this assembly around energy conservation. Regarding the programs that the Member is talking about, we give \$100,000 a year to the Arctic Energy Technology Program as well as \$120,000 a year to the Commercial Technologies Conversation and Efficiency Program. The Member is talking about the uptake on this program. I believe it is a very successful program, but there are things in place to help address some of these things.

Presently, if a program is oversubscribed this early on, the department or another department or the Arctic Energy Alliance will do a review process, usually quarterly, on where certain projects are, and if someone who is going to be a recipient of these funds is not able to use this money in this fiscal year, that money will be re-profiled back into the program and the next person on the waiting list will have an opportunity to access that money.

As well, I believe in the second and third quarters of the fiscal year, the Arctic Energy Alliance does a review on fiscally where they are at and which programs are not being overspent. These monies can be reallocated within that fiscal year to help address some of these things. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that response. Good to hear that the Arctic Energy Alliance can actually re-profile money within their own envelope, but we have actually seen a reduction in their funding over the last few years because there was extra money made available as part of the deal to subsidize hydro low-water levels. Can the Minister, though, commit to bring back a substantially increased budget for the Arctic Energy Alliance in 2018-2019 so that we can continue with and build on the success of their programs?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Going forward, the one thing I am going to be able to commit to is that we are engaged with the federal government, as I said in my Minister's statement today, on the low carbon economy leadership fund. This is a fund that we

believe can be used to help top up the Arctic Energy Alliance, and we believe it could actually even be in the million-dollar range to help support these programs moving forward. We will continue to update Members as we get more criteria and results from the federal government on where that is going.

MR. O'REILLY: That is a great figure from the Minister. That is exactly what the Regular MLAs asked for in the last budget, but you did not top it up. Glad to hear that there might be more available from the federal government, but as the feds come in, we want to make sure that we do not use that as an excuse to start to withdraw our funding. Will the Minister commit to at least maintaining our funding level for the Arctic Energy Alliance as new federal funding might become available?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Going forward, I do not see us backing off on the commitment that we already give the Arctic Energy Alliance. We give them roughly \$2.7 million a year, and 95 per cent of that comes from the territorial government. We believe this low carbon fund will help us meet our energy strategy going forward. Particularly, there is 15 per cent in the strategy that we want to use towards energy efficiency on buildings across the Northwest Territories, and 40 per cent for renewable energy sources for space heating by 2030. We need these types of resources to help accomplish this in our energy strategy moving forward.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks very much to the Minister. I am very glad to get that commitment that, if the feds start coming in, we are not going to start clawing back money out of the Arctic Energy Alliance.

I am just wondering if the Minister can tell us what sort of program review or evaluation cycle is in place for the Arctic Energy Alliance overall. When could we expect that sort of evaluation to take place so that they can start to offer more programs and services? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Yes, the Government of Northwest Territories is in the process of reviewing Arctic Energy Alliance programs and services to ensure programs represent the best value for money on these programs and meet the goals that we want to achieve, particularly around our energy strategy moving forward. I can update the Member, as of right now, I think that we are in the process of awarding an RFP for that work, and it should be getting under way by next month. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.