

**Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
Capital Budget—Dept. of Finance
Fiscal Responsibility Policy**

September 27, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Earlier in my general comments on the overall capital budget, I suggested that there be a part of the capital budget where compliance with the fiscal responsibility policy is actually discussed and the calculations are provided so we understand what the envelope is for capital spending. The Minister, as I recall, committed to provide that to Regular MLAs sometime during the business plans. That's like in November. Could the Minister maybe expedite that a little bit? Presumably they've already done all this work. Is there some way we could get it sooner than the business plans? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, in the spirit of cooperation and transparency, I will endeavour to get that information to the Members before the business plans. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. That's great and, of course, I'm going to say the sooner the better, but I'll leave it to the Minister and his staff to prepare it. We've got it before us so the work has already been done internally, presumably.

Can I get a commitment out of the Minister that, in future infrastructure acquisition plans or capital budgets, that will become a regular component of the document with future capital budgets? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, we could probably provide that during the review of the capital plan. I'm not sure about putting in the actual document, but we will provide it to committee during the actual business plan and then make a decision as to whether we put it into the document.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess I'm getting half of what I want. This is an important policy. We passed it in the House, as I seem to recall, so showing some accountability to the public that we actually live by this policy would be helpful in the future capital budgets, but I'm going to leave it to the Minister. Maybe we can work that out with the next one. It looks like he wants to say something so I'm happy to get his comments. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We can't give him all he wants right away. We'll give him half of what he wants for now, and when we are discussing the

terms of the business plans, or capital plans, and that is what I should have said before instead of business plans, then we can make the determination there as to whether we included it into the capital planning document. I am sure we will get some feedback from committee, and we will take that into consideration. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Minister McLeod. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate that. I know that we have moved the finance department along because they do provide that information now in the public accounts, but that is a retrospect of how we have actually done with the Fiscal Responsibility Act. I think that it would be good financial practice and good public policy to actually include it in future capital plans. We are having the debate and discussion, and that is good, so we have moved the department along a little bit.