

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

QUESTION 911-18(2): UNIVERSAL AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE

September 28, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Will the Minister post the feasibility study of universal affordable daycare in the NWT to the Department of Education, Culture and Employment website, yes or no? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am well aware of the feasibility study that was tabled in the House in the last government. We can put a link to that Tabled Document on our website. Thank you.

MR. O'REILLY: I'd like to thank the Minister for his answer and his response. Thank you. Did the Department of Education, Culture and Employment undertake any work to produce the universal childcare implementation plan called for in the 2016-2019 mandate of the Government of the Northwest Territories, yes or no?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Yes, we did start doing some work on the action plan. I do want to inform the Member and Members of the House that we're currently in negotiations with the Government of Canada on a bilateral agreement that will include an early learning and childcare action plan that does outline spending over a three-year period that will take us to the end of this government. Mind you, it's not a universal childcare action plan, but it will be an action plan that will help guide us in early childhood programming and services to the end of this government.

MR. O'REILLY: Again, I'd like to thank the Minister for his answer. Has the Department of Education, Culture and Employment calculated the value of the reduction in costs for universal childcare given that junior kindergarten has started this year, yes or no?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: We're still getting the enrolment rates for junior kindergarten students, so we don't have an exact number. What we did look at, though, was every family was going to be saving anywhere from \$8,000 to \$12,000 a year, and that's what we've got now, but we don't have the full enrolment rates of junior kindergarten at this time.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I'd like to again thank the Minister for his answer in the House, and I guess once we get those enrolment figures we can look at what rolling out universal childcare would actually cost.

My next question: will the Minister prepare a detailed action plan, including deliverables and completion dates, for the introduction of universal affordable childcare in the Northwest Territories, yes or no? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: On universal childcare, not at this time. I can't commit to that.

As I did mention, we are in bilateral negotiations with the Government of Canada to get some funding that will roll out early learning and childcare action plan. As I mentioned, that will take us to the end of this government, and we will be sharing that with committee once that bilateral agreement is signed. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.