

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

**QUESTION 916-18(2):
RESOURCE AND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION INITIATIVE**

October 3, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Industry who is leading the Resource and Energy Development and Information campaign or REDI. Can the Minister explain how REDI is supposed to build public confidence in our ability to develop resources in a responsible way? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Based on the Member's statement today and from when he was in committee last week, I think there is a disconnect from how his vision of REDI is and what our vision of REDI is. REDI is a fact-based information based on risks and potential of resource and energy development in the Northwest Territories, and that is how we are taking part in engaging the public in the NWT.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that response, and I guess we can agree to disagree, but somehow, I would hope that he would agree that building public confidence in our ability to manage resource development is something that we should be working towards. The REDI campaign, though, seems to be partially in response to the attempt to regulate fracking during the 17th Assembly. I could locate only two handouts or five pages on fracking and REDI materials, and there is not much discussion in there about impacts or tradeoffs.

In many other jurisdictions in Canada, they have done examinations of this issue through expert panels, independent panels, and that includes the Yukon. While we have time, would the Minister commit to an independent panel to examine and report on the issues of whether we should allow fracking in the NWT, and under what terms and conditions?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The short answer is, no. The government is going to be carrying out our Petroleum and Resource Act on oil and gas operations in the very near future. This is going to give residents of the Northwest Territories an opportunity to discuss what level of transparency they want to see in hydraulic fracturing. We will bring that forward at the time. There will probably be a number of questions around hydraulic fracturing, I believe, when we go out with this, as it was a big subject on the last Assembly. They are going to know what kind of fluids are used, or additives, and these sort of things, and transparency and confidentiality provisions, these sorts of things that are in that act, and we will be bringing those forward when we go forward, as I said, with the Petroleum Resource and Oil and Gas Act.

MR. O'REILLY: I look forward to that process of building confidence and trust as we move forward, but one of the biggest obstacles to ensure public confidence in our

resource development decisions and to ensure timely and informed decisions is a lack of any participant or intervener funding programs. Canadians south of 60 degrees north have a right to participant funding in federal environmental assessments while we do not. Why is participant funding not part of the REDI campaign?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The Member brought this up when we were in the briefing on REDI. At that point, if I said, that these are all worthy considerations that can be considered by Members of Cabinet, and I recommended at that time that he can bring them forward in a letter to us, and we can be able to look at those initiatives moving forward, but REDI initiative is not the place to have these discussions.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks again to the Minister, but I am not sure how REDI is going to make us anymore ready for resource development. As I said, REDI is clearly focused on promoting resource development, and that is a good thing, and it is something that ITI does very well. No question about that. I mentioned a number of other initiatives that would help build public confidence in our resource management decisions including: a science advisor to Cabinet; re-establishment of a round table on the environment and economy; completion of land use plans; completion of our protected areas. Why are these initiatives not part of the REDI campaign?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As I have said, I think we can agree to disagree. REDI is about a public information initiative to bring a whole government approach to all the things that relate to resource development. It is not about promoting resource development. It is about informing the general public of what concerns they can have, and have one-on-one conversations with geologists, land inspectors, water inspectors, regulators, regulatory bodies, and that is what the initiative is, to help inform the public. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.