

**Mid-term Review Committee of the 18th Legislative Assembly
Frame Lake MLA Kevin O'Reilly Questions to Premier
October 4, 2017**

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. During questions for the selection of Premier back on December 16, 2015, MLA McLeod said, "I commit here to meeting with leaders within 45 days and presenting new offers within 90 days." New offers to the NWT Metis Nation and Akaitcho Dene First Nations were made on May 24th and 25th of this year respectively. There was no involvement or consultation with Regular MLAs as part of that process.

He also committed to, "establishing a joint committee of Cabinet and Regular Members to provide oversight and give direction to the negotiating process." This group does not provide oversight and give direction, and has met a total of two times so far. Completion of outstanding land rights agreements should be a priority for our government. What assurance can the Premier give that he will deliver completed land rights agreements by the end of this term, including working more closely with Regular MLAs? Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Lafferty): Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I can certainly go back and read the whole section back to the Member, but he's already done that. We are committed to working very hard to try to achieve settlement of all land claims in the 18th Legislative Assembly. We have to recognize there are three unique parties to the negotiations: the federal government, the Government of the Northwest Territories, and the appropriate Aboriginal government. We recognize that there are significant issues and challenges that have led to most of these agreements being under negotiation for over 20 years, 25 years, and it was felt that just making an offer within 45 days would be an empty gesture.

We're working with the Government of Canada. We hired ministerial special representatives to look at the processes, and they came back and made recommendations as to how we could have a way forward. Our negotiators have made offers to the NWT Metis Nation and to the Akaitcho governments, and I think they were well-received. Recently we received a response from the Dehcho. We've met with the federal government, and with clarifications, we're expecting to issue a similar offer. We're also working with the joint Cabinet committee as per the terms of reference, and we will continue to do so. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. During questions back on December 15, 2015, the Premier promised to "have a discussion and a public forum like this on how we would address our fiscal situation." I'm not aware of any such public forum that was held on Cabinet's fiscal strategy of \$150 million in reductions and layoffs. In fact, our first two budgets created huge divisions between Regular MLAs and Cabinet and took an extraordinary amount of time to resolve. My friend on the other side, Minister Abernethy, actually raised this himself today. In my view, the time spent on the budgets could and should have been spent working on important mandate matters. How will the Premier handle the remaining two budgets with regard to public engagement and working with Regular MLAs? Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Lafferty): Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. If I recall, both of the budgets in the past two years have been approved by this Assembly, and so we have a process that I think has been working. Business plans will be reviewed with the Members. The Minister of Finance has indicated that

we have a consultation process, and we'll be looking at doing something more in depth before the last budget of this government.

We can certainly have a discussion with the Members with regards to where they want to go with this. There are some substantial new initiatives that are coming forward. A lot of it is outside of our control, but we're always ready to have a discussion on these kinds of issues. Thank you, Mr. Chair.