

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for Minister Abernethy. On December 9, 2015, MLA Abernethy put his name forward to serve as our Premier. In his candidacy speech, Mr. Abernethy said "we have a new energy, new ideas" and "the status quo is no longer acceptable." Can the Minister tell us what he has personally done to change the status quo here at the Legislative Assembly over the last two years, and what further work remains? Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Lafferty): Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I remember intimately what it's like to be a Member of this Assembly and not sit in on the Executive Council side. It can be very frustrating for Members when they don't feel like they are getting information, or there are surprises that occur in the House. I do not support surprises for anybody in this Assembly on either side, so I've worked very hard over the last two years to make sure that Members are informed on issues related to health and social services. I have gone extra steps to make sure that we are providing them with detailed information when crises are occurring in communities, and providing them updates on a regular basis. I'm trying hard to work with MLAs on a regular basis to make sure that their input is incorporated in things that are actually happening in this Assembly. Outside of this Assembly, we have also tried to do things differently. I believe that there are answers, and good, great ideas in communities on the issues that are facing them, and I think it's really important for us to really engage with stakeholders. When it comes to things like developing a framework and an action plan for things like disabilities, I have gone to the stakeholders and asked them to be part of the design of frameworks. I have asked them to actually help hold the pen. This is not something that has happened very often in this Assembly. It happened once before on the anti-poverty framework and action plan. These are things that are important to me, and working with Members and working with stakeholders, and giving them opportunities to take their consideration, and listen to what they are saying, and use those ideas to make change is different than things have been done traditionally, and I think it is a good way of doing business. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister responsible for the Public Utilities Board. We have this weird situation, Mr. Chair, where we now have deputy ministers sitting as the board of the Northwest Territories Power Corporation, so we have some control over what they propose to the Public Utilities Board. We also appoint the Public Utilities Board, and we also provide direction to them. The last time the Minister provided direction to the Public Utilities Board came completely out of the blue. Regular Members had no idea that this was going to happen. It is just a very unusual situation. I am hoping the Minister can help me understand what his vision is for the future of the Public Utilities Board is over the next two years? Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Lafferty): Masi. Minister Abernethy.

HON. GLEN ABERNETHY: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the Public Utilities Board has a very important role in reviewing the rates that different energy providers and distributors want to charge residents across the Northwest Territories. That is the Power

Corp. as well as other organization like NUL. There are more than one organization that they are reviewing the rates from. As long as there is multiple organizations, multiple power providers, I think it is in the best interests of the people of the Northwest Territories that we have this independent body reviewing the numbers that are being proposed by these different distributors and power providers.

At this point in time, there is no anticipation of removing the board or getting rid of the Public Utilities Board. As a note, Ministers have given direction to PUB in the past. We can give direction, general policy direction, not specific direction, but general policy direction prior to them going into reviews of different applications which is what we did in this case. I have answered questions to this effect to the Member previously. I, of course, would love to have been able to provide the Members more update, but the information came to us that required a fairly quick decision. We made the decision and immediately gave the MLAs a heads up. We will certainly endeavor to give MLAs more heads up in the future because like I said before, I am not a big fan of surprises. Sometimes, situations do arise that need immediate response, and that was the situation in this particular case. Thank you, Mr. Chair.