

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Finance. For at least the last two years, and probably longer, GNWT has raised more money from taxes on alcohol and tobacco than we get to keep from resource revenues as a result of devolution. Rather than get into a debate about what other benefits we may be getting from resource development, I want the Minister to discuss what he has done with regard to tax fairness and what he intends to do in the remainder of our term on tax fairness. Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Lafferty):** Masi. Minister Robert C. McLeod.

**HON ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, with the discussions we have in this House all the time about the cost of living across the NWT, I think one of the biggest accomplishments for tax fairness across the Northwest Territories is the fact that we haven't raised personal tax for years and have people pay for some of the challenges that we have been facing, because we all recognize that there is a high cost of living in the Northwest Territories. We do review our taxes; I think we made a couple of recommendations through our business planning process that we've gone through, but we will continue to ensure that the taxes are fair for all residents across the NWT. Again, I remind Members that one thing we do not want to do is increase personal income tax and have that burden beared by the residents of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Finance. Traditionally, Ministers of Finance have met with NGOs, the business community, and the public in seeking input into, and explaining our budgets. I can personally recall meeting with at least four different Finance Ministers at such consultations before I became an MLA. Budget dialogue 2016 was a website-based consultation process, and that happened during a period of major cutbacks. Does the Minister intend to undertake any meaningful public engagement around the remaining two budgets? Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Lafferty):** Mahsi. Minister Robert C. McLeod.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, the Member is correct. There was a time when there was some budget dialogue that went around across the Northwest Territories, and I remember being part of a Regular Members committee that actually split into two groups and did budget dialogue in the north and southern parts of the Northwest Territories. We were able to get some valuable feedback out of that process, but that process took place long before the business plans were even developed. Our business plans are in the process of being developed right now. I believe we have business plans coming up in November. If there is commitment to do some budget dialogue, to actually add some value to it, it would have to be done before the business planning review has even started, so we can incorporate what some of the comments we get back. There is processes through the website, and in talking to your MLAs, and in meeting with people out there, but I would have to find out. I do not know if we have time this year because the business plan is being developed. I can commit as we go forward to probably the last year of our last budget, then, there may be an opportunity there to take it out on the road, but then we would have to do it before our business plans are developed. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

