

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Look, I'm having so much fun here. I'd like to get a referral to rules so that we can extend question period every day in the House, but more seriously, my question is for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment: there's been a lot of upheaval and loss of visitor service capacity in Yellowknife with the closure of the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre. It's my view that this was completely preventable if adequate and comparable support had been provided by ITI. Can the Minister describe his vision for tourism in Yellowknife for the next two years? How he's going to get there and whether he will dedicate funding to get us there? Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, I don't focus particularly right on one city as his question is related. Tourism is a territorial-wide initiative. It's one way we are going to diversify our economy and help build Aboriginal businesses and corporations to be part of the tourism industry in a government-wide initiative. Specifically for the City of Yellowknife, we are working directly with the City of Yellowknife and moving this initiative forward. It's unfortunate that the Northern Frontier Visitors Centre had financial challenges around running their operation and they've made a decision to walk away and shut down. We've taken the building back as part of that initiative and taken that off their hands so there's responsibility for them on that part. We will work closely with the city. Tourism is a big part of our industry in the Northwest Territories as I said in diversifying our economy. It's injecting 200 million dollars into it. The City of Yellowknife does reap the biggest benefits of it because it's the central location of where people come. We're spending \$7 million across this initiative territorial-wide and we will continue to do that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment and Public Works and Services. So our government has more than doubled the Mining Incentive Program that provides public subsidies for exploration. In contrast, our funding for Arctic Energy Alliance has actually declined. Can the Minister explain this contrasting investment pattern when we have obligations with regard to climate change and investment in energy retrofits creates more jobs per dollar invested than any form of non-renewable resource development? Mahsi, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We put more money into MIP for resource development in the Northwest Territories; that was one of the mandated things that we wanted to do as the 18th Legislative Assembly, was to bring mineral development back to the Northwest Territories, and we continue to do that. Arctic Energy Alliance is a very important part of my portfolios under Infrastructure. This is something that's going to be something very important moving forward around our energy strategy, our climate change strategy moving forward. As I've said in the House, we have lobbied the federal government and the Minister of Infrastructure for some more funding, and I think there are some great opportunities. I think I've been on the record as saying we're going to try to get an extra million dollars for the Arctic Energy Alliance moving forward, and I believe in this agency and the great work that they're doing for the residents of the Northwest Territories. We will continue to work on both of these

things and initiatives moving forward for the Government of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Chair.