

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

QUESTION 19-18(3): NORTHWEST TERRITORIES MINERAL SECTOR REVIEW REPORT

October 18, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My question is for the Minister responsible for Mining. My statement described a recently released study that reviewed the NWT sector and compared it against international standards. The GNWT Commission Study says that we mostly failed or there is room for significant improvements. Can the Minister tell us when this study was completed and why it was released well after any of the public engagement meetings on the Mineral Resources Act? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

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

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Bauer was hired as a consultant to assist ITI with pre-scoping interviews and benchmarking exercise for the Mineral Resource Act. That was done prior to us coming out with the Mineral Resource Act. Based on what we have heard from public engagement, the department decided to release its report. I think what it does is provide background information to add a more detailed discussion, was the request, and that's why we have put this report out there.

The nice thing about this report is it gives us a critical view of the current situation around *Mineral Resource Act* in the Northwest Territories. One thing that I must say is that the report is based on his point of view, but I think it gives us a clear view of what can be changed and what should be changed in a *Mineral Resource Act* moving forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that, but I didn't actually get an answer about when it was completed. It is just very curious that they would hold on to this study until after all of the public engagement meetings were finished. As the government's discussion paper on the *Mineral Resources Act* is actually devoid of any presentation of alternatives, options, analysis, or even recommendations for change, it is very curious how this study on NWT mineral sector was released so late in the public engagement process.

Can the Minister tell us what studies or reviews his department has prepared for the *Mineral Resources Act*, and if those will be released as part of the public engagement processes?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: The only other things that we have going on around the Mineral Resource Act is a comprehensive research on policy, jurisdictional scans, and best practices. That will assist in the development of the *Mineral Resource Act* moving forward.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that. This other work that is being done, why is it not being released now so that we can actually have a meaningful and engaged public discussion about this? Holding onto this until after the public engagement meetings are

already done, that just doesn't seem to make any sense. It is very important to properly research alternatives and options, present them to the public for an informed and meaningful input in order to get the new *Mineral Resources Act* right.

Is the Minister prepared to release more of the department's internal work and extend the consultation on the new *Mineral Resources Act* to get it right and include the public?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I will have to have a check with the department on what we can all release here that is public information. I don't think we would have a problem with, you know, we are doing a jurisdictional scan of best practices across the country. That is open to everybody, but I am sure we have it all gathered up. We can share that with all people in the Northwest Territories.

The *Mineral Resource Act* is one of the most important pieces of legislation, I think, going forward in this Legislative Assembly, as it drives the biggest part of our economy, and we want to make sure we get it right.

We have been out to all of the regional centres to hear what they have had to say. We have a comprehensive online survey that everyone can participate in the Northwest Territories. Those of us in the House who haven't had a look at it, I suggest that you go to the website and have a look at it. It is a very good process to put in to have what you have to say about it. We will continue to do that to try to make this the best *Mineral Resource Act* for the residents of the Northwest Territories.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks to the Minister for that. Well, we will agree that it is important to get it right, but without having any information out there, how can we have a meaningful and informed debate around this and for the public to meaningfully engage in it?

There is obviously a lot of work that needs to be done to improve our "paltry corporate income taxes" from the mining sector and our world's "most charitable fiscal regime" for the mining sector. Those are quotes from the Bauer study. There are no options, modeling, or analysis on this important issue and any of the materials put forward to date by the department. When does the Minister intend to make such information public? How will the public be engaged and how can he possibly meet the ambitious schedule of having a new *Mineral Resources Act* for this House in 2018? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. There have been several questions there, so I will allow the Minister to answer all of them or one of them. Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: I would like to address the Member's question. He is concerned about consultation and how we are reaching out. As we said, we are going out there. We are going to put out a document on what we have heard. I think we are actually going to do the key elements paper outlining the policy potential changes that could be out there. We are also probably going to go out, I imagine, for a second round of input. There is going to be a lot of time for people to have their say in this. Like I said,

we need to get this right, and it is one of the more important ones that we need to do in this government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.