

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

QUESTION 54-18(3): CONSULTATION PRIOR TO ISSUANCE OF RED ALERT

February 7, 2018

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I mentioned in my Member's statement about the Premier's Red Alert that there were a number of news releases issued by Indigenous governments raising concerns about the lack of consultation around the Red Alert. Can the Premier explain why he did not consult with Regular MLAs or the regional Indigenous governments before going to Ottawa to issue his Red Alert? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have been speaking about the elements of the Red Alert for two years. First and foremost, on the moratorium, and I have to correct the Member. He said he had to correct me in the media because I made erroneous statements. I think he made an erroneous statement about the moratorium. It's not a five year moratorium. It's an indefinite moratorium and to new offshore oil and gas licences.

So first and foremost about the moratorium, I've been speaking for over a year. The one-year anniversary for the moratorium is December 21 and it has gained no traction from southern or northern media on devolution, the parts of devolution. Devolution was negotiated in 2014. Two years later, we're still waiting for certain elements of the devolution agreement to be acted on. On the programs and services for Aboriginal people, 10 principles came out, and we were not able to get any answers. I met individually with the Aboriginal governments that were quoted and the Gwich'in, and they said that they had not talked to the media at all. So we had an intergovernmental council, and we met, and we now understand each other, that the Aboriginal governments were meeting with the federal government for some period of time without our knowledge or involvement, but we have all agreed we are all going to work together so that programs and services can be fully funded and certainly so that Aboriginal governments can benefit from it, as well, with our support.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Premier for his valiant defence of the Red Alert. He did not really answer the question about prior consultation, and I will table the news releases from the Indigenous governments in the House tomorrow. In the past, Cabinets retained lobbyists in Ottawa to provide advice on federal engagement. Cabinet currently has a \$120,000 sole-sourced contract with communications firm and federal lobbyist Global Public Affairs. Can the Premier tell this House where the idea came from to issue the Red Alert and what role the lobbyist firm has played in the campaign to date?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Global Public Affairs has been contracted by the Government of the Northwest Territories to help us advance the objectives of the federal engagement strategy. It also provides what we call strategic intelligence on the workings of Ottawa,

and it also provides assistance with communications. It helped us release the Red Alert, which gained some national attention.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Premier for confirming the role that Global Public Affairs has played to date. Global Public Affairs, though, has also represented a number of other industries, organizations, governments in relation to NWT affairs in the past, including Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Inuvialuit Development Corporation, and others. Can the Premier tell us whether Global Public Affairs currently represents any other interests in the NWT and how those roles and responsibilities are kept clear to avoid conflicts of interest?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Global Public Affairs currently does not represent any other clients in the Northwest Territories, and the contractual arrangements clearly provide for conflict provisions so that we have no conflicts. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President, and I would like to thank the Premier for providing that clarity on that particular issue, but, given that the Premier has issued a challenge for debate on the future of the Northwest Territories on the floor of the House of Commons in Ottawa, it is surprising that there has been no similar call here at home. Is the Premier ready and willing to have an emergency debate on the so-called Red Alert and future of the Northwest Territories here on the floor of this House? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I had called for a national discussion because it was our understanding that the Prime Minister was getting most of his advice from southern Canada and he was seeking to get most of the votes from southern Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.