

## ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

### QUESTION 83-18(3): CARBON PRICING

February 12, 2018

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I'd like to start with something really simple: can the Minister of Finance tell the public whether our government actually believes in climate change and that carbon pricing is an essential tool to address this threat? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. The Member is asking for the Minister's opinion. Can he reiterate the question?

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Yes, I can clarify that. Can the Minister of Finance, then, tell the public: what is the position of our government with regard to climate change, impacts on our environment and our people, and whether carbon pricing is an essential tool to address this threat? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Finance.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the position of the government is, because we see the effects of climate change quicker than the rest of the country, of course we know that is a serious concern, especially up in the Arctic. That is why we have taken steps through the Climate Change Strategic Framework and the carbon pricing paper that we are working on to try and help mitigate the effects of climate change on the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Apologies for not offering the question properly. I appreciate the response from the Minister. He did not really address the issue, though, of carbon pricing as an essential tool.

Earlier today I tried to jog the memory of our Cabinet colleagues on the issue of carbon pricing. The public commentary for the discussion paper and survey closed on September the 15<sup>th</sup> of last year. Can the Minister of Finance tell us if and when a "What We Heard" report is going to be released and whether the written submissions received will also be released?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** We are planning on sharing the information that was gathered. I think we have a briefing scheduled with committee during this session, so we plan on sharing our findings with committee, and then we need to share some of the information we have gathered with the federal government, and then we will be in a position to share with the public as well.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks to the Minister for that explanation. It sounds like there are a lot of things that are still coming, but we actually have a hard deadline we have to deal with. The federal government keeps moving forward with the national approach on climate change that will allow Canada to meet its international obligations. We now have a deadline of March 30, about seven weeks away, to make a decision about our own carbon pricing system or rely on the federal backstop. Can the Minister tell us how he

intends to meet this federal deadline and still include the input of committee, and perhaps the public, on his proposed course of actions?

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** The Member is correct. We do have a very hard deadline, but we have done a lot of work on this. We do plan on sharing our findings with committee, and one of the challenges we had is that we wanted to get out there and we wanted to get opinions from across the Northwest Territories. Using the federal backstop, we wanted to make sure that the Northwest Territories was wellpositioned to mitigate the effects of carbon pricing on the residents of the Northwest Territories, and I think, through the correspondence and the surveys and the discussions we have had, that we have had a lot of feedback on how people thought it would affect them. I think the sign of a good government is to make sure that we mitigate the effects that it is going to have on the residents of the Northwest Territories.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks again to the Minister for that, but we do not have a firm schedule from the Minister. He has admitted there is a lot of work that has to be done. We do not even have the results from the discussion paper consultations. He has to work with committee. He says he is going to talk to the public. Can the Minister commit to table a schedule of these sort of consultations leading up to the March 30<sup>th</sup> deadline in this House as soon as possible? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. ROBERT MCLEOD:** I am not quite sure exactly when our briefing is with committee. I will have to get that information, and in the consensusstyle government we work in, we want to share our information with committee before we share with anyone else.

We will have that conversation, but I can assure committee and members of the public that this government will be ready by the March 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. I know the federal government wants the submissions by then. They are going to review them, and then possibly come out in September with some comments on the material that we have submitted.

Again, I will say, at the end of the day, our main goal here is to work with what we have to make sure that there is not a negative impact on the people of the Northwest Territories. We want to let the federal government know of our unique situation up here. We have told them that a few times. Hopefully, they will recognize that and give us some assurance that they will take that into account when they review our document. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.