

## MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

### ARCTIC POLICY FRAMEWORK

February 21, 2018

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. It was very disappointing to hear the Premier reject the report and findings of the Ministerial Special Representative on Arctic Leadership, Mary Simon, in this House on February 13.

Ms. Simon held 65 engagement meetings involving 170 people, including the Premier, and received 34 written submissions to help her prepare her report. That's a lot more than the zero public engagement that the three northern Premiers undertook in putting together the Pan-Territorial Vision for Sustainable Development.

Ms. Simon's excellent report made a number of recommendations in the areas of education, research and Indigenous knowledge, infrastructure, broadband telecommunications, housing, reducing fossil fuel dependence, Arctic conservation, addressing the mental health crisis, and specific suggestions for the development of an Arctic Policy Framework. This balanced approach truly reflects sustainability in its broadest sense by including aspects of environment, economy, culture, wellness, and social development.

Recently the Premier tabled a document titled "We are One Mind" prepared by Dene Nahjo, Our Voices, and Qanak, who are collectives of emerging leaders from the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut. This document offers their perspective on the Arctic Policy Framework. Recommendations are made under three themes: one is Northerners leading northern policy engagement; another is protecting future generations; and healthy economies is the third theme.

Specific recommendations include creation of a Northern Policy Institute and the University of the Arctic, stronger recognition of Indigenous languages, investment in childcare, development of Indigenous protected areas, and more. This report also takes a broad and balanced approach to sustainability.

The directions of these two reports stands in contrast to the narrow focus of the Pan-Territorial Vision for Sustainable Development put forward exclusively by the three northern Premiers and the direction that the Premier seems to want to take on the Northwest Territories Chapter of the Arctic Policy Framework.

I will have questions later today for the Premier on these matters. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.