

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

QUESTION 141-18(3): ARCTIC POLICY FRAMEWORK

FEBRUARY 21, 2018

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. In my statement earlier today I noted the extensive public engagement undertaken by Mary Simon as the Ministerial Special Representative on Arctic Leadership. I understand that she actually met with our Premier as well. I am wondering: can the Premier tell us what he talked about when he met with Ms. Simon in her work as Ministerial Special Representative on Arctic Leadership? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The MLA for Frame Lake is on record as stating he wants no mines, no oil and gas, and in his Minister's statement, I am not surprised at the line of his questioning.

I met with the Ministerial Special Representative on Arctic Leadership in February of 2016. I spoke to her about our shared interests in closing the gap to create meaningful outcomes for people living in the Arctic, working to better the lives of residents, and building productive and collaborative relationships. We discussed lowering the costs of living by building infrastructure, education, training and capacity development, community wellness, youth development, suicide prevention, and balancing efforts to grow and diversify the economy with environmental sustainability and climate change.

I emphasized the importance of Northerners making decisions about the North, and I believe that was reflected in her final report. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I am happy to take the promotion from the Premier inviting me over to that side of the House any day. What I would like to ask the Premier next, then, is if he could tell us whether GNWT prepared a written submission for the Ministerial Special Representative on Arctic Leadership, and if so, can he table it in the House?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: There were two letters written to Ms. Simon during her engagement process, and I would be pleased to table them at the appropriate time.

MR. O'REILLY: I would like to thank the Premier for that commitment, and I look forward to reading the correspondence.

The Premier confirmed earlier in February that there was no public engagement in the development of the Pan-Territorial Framework for Sustainable Development. During my questioning earlier in this sitting, I made specific suggestions for improving our focus on the Arctic Policy Framework by taking a sustainability approach that includes environment, economy, culture, and social inclusion. Can the Minister explain whether the NWT chapter of the Arctic Policy Framework will take a balanced sustainability focus that is likely to include aspects of the environment, economy, culture, and social development?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: That is the position we have always taken, and certainly my expectation is that the Arctic chapter or the Arctic Policy Framework will reflect that, recognizing that this will be a federal document.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I appreciate the commitment from the Minister to ensure that it is going to be a broader approach than the Pan-Territorial Vision for Sustainable Development that he developed. I think, all of us in this House, we can recognize and congratulate Dene Nahjo for their hard work on "We Are One Mind" that the Premier tabled last week in the House. That document is going to be a valuable contribution to the development of a Northwest Territories chapter of the Arctic Policy Framework. Can the Premier tell this House how he intends to engage Dene Nahjo in the development of the NWT chapter of the Arctic Policy Framework? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: We are very pleased with the initiative and leadership shown by Dene Nahjo, and our officials have been in contact with the principals. We have been asked and been given permission to incorporate parts or sections of their report into the draft Northwest Territories paper. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.