

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Lands Rights Agreements Negotiations
Committee of the Whole—2018-2019 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Executive and Indigenous Affairs—February 22, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: I want to move on to one other item in this section of the budget. It is also highlighted in the budget address document of additional \$595,000 to be allocated to help finalize Indigenous rights agreements. Can someone tell me what that money is going to be used for and what it is going to accomplish? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. That money will be used to have a push to try to significantly advance, if not finalize, the outstanding land claims in the next couple of years. It will be for negotiators. Also, the Ministerial Special Representative in the reports made some recommendations for our government to play a much enhanced facilitation role in having Aboriginal governments meet to resolve outstanding issues amongst themselves. I think we are at a point where we made revised offers to the NWT Metis nation and to the Akaitcho government. We are optimistic that we will be making a similar offer to the Deh Cho First Nations in the near future, as well. I think that these resources will allow us to do so. Maybe I will ask Mr. Courtoreille to go into more detail with regard to the breakdown of the funding. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Premier McLeod. Time has expired, but I will allow more clarification. Go ahead, Mr. Courtoreille.

MR. COURTOREILLE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The \$595,000 proposed for this budget item consists of \$450,000 in contract services primarily related to the hiring of additional negotiators; \$55,000 related to travel; and \$90,000 related to facilitation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. Courtoreille. Further questions? Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Thanks for your patience. I just have a couple of others I want to follow up on, on this one. We have had a couple of years where the budget for negotiations or support for negotiations has been cut in the previous two budgets. It is good to see there is going to be some increased funding here. What assurance can the Minister give us that this is going to help close these deals? We are more than two years past the beginning of our mandate, and there hasn't been one new agreement signed. The joint advisory committee that was set up with the MLAs has met twice. What assurance can the Premier give us that these deals are going to be closed in the less than two years left in our mandate? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. McNeely): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Premier McLeod.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is not a business where I can guarantee or give any assurances. All I can say is we are giving it an all-out effort to significantly advance the outstanding land claims. I believe that with these additional

resources and renewed effort and new approach, that we will make significant progress.
Thank you, Mr. Chair.