

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

### **POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

**March 7, 2018**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I have raised concerns regarding our support for post-secondary education in this House several times during this Assembly. The Minister of Education allowed Aurora College to cut the teacher education and social work programs as part of Cabinet's fiscal strategy and before efforts were made to improve them. He announced a foundational review on Aurora College and then got rid of the Aurora College Board. There appears to be little done to respond to the recommendations from the 2013 Cleveland review of Aurora College.

The steering committee for the foundational review is made up only of GNWT staff, without any outside expertise in post-secondary education system development. Advocates for the social work program had to go public before they were included in the consultations. Organized labour was not included, either.

There seems to be little under way within ECE to develop a knowledge economy. The Minister focuses narrowly on Skills 4 Success and meeting big industry-focused labour market demand. Instead, he should be reshaping labour market demand by building on our assets, such as traditional knowledge, co-management regimes, cold weather technology, environmental remediation, and more. While the Yukon is heading towards the first university in northern Canada, we have our heads buried in the sand, or snow.

Where is the long-promised post-secondary education legislation? Where is the work to build a knowledge economy? Why do we not have the foundational review to study in this session? Where are the plans for this social work and teacher education program? Where is the leadership we need on post-secondary education? I'll have questions later today for the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.