

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

**QUESTION 218-18(3):
AURORA COLLEGE FOUNDATIONAL REVIEW AND POST-SECONDARY
EDUCATION**

MARCH 7, 2018

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Earlier today I raised questions regarding leadership on post-secondary education in the Northwest Territories. There are a lot of people anxiously awaiting the Aurora College Foundational Review, including students, instructors, and even Regular MLAs. Can the Minister of Education tell us all when the foundational review will be released to the public? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Education, Culture and Employment.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in support of the Government of the Northwest Territories' mandate, the department and Aurora College are embarking on an ambitious path to change that will lead to expanded opportunities right across the Northwest Territories for residents. They gave an update earlier this session on those. I am expecting this foundational review, the final report to be delivered to myself by March 31st.

Further to that, Mr. Speaker, once we do get the final report, we are going to develop a management response that will be prepared to support the implementations or the recommendations. Providing a management response just for all Members and residents to a report of this nature is a standard practice right across Canada. The management response is the government's opportunity to consider the feasibility of each of the recommendations and also compliments the report by making clear and transparent what will be implemented.

This analysis, Mr. Speaker, will take about several weeks to be completed. It will be made public, both the report and the management response once they have been completed, including time for input also from standing committee. We are looking at a time of the 2018-2019 academic year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I'd like to thank the Minister for that. Hopefully the report will come out earlier in the 2018-2019 academic year. I'll look forward to seeing that.

The Minister has been on record as saying that the future of the social work and teacher education program is tied to the Aurora College foundational review. There's actually money in the 2018-2019 budget for these programs. Can the Minister tell us whether this is still the case about the programs' future being determined by the foundational review and whether either of these programs will be offered again at Aurora College in the fall of this year?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: As Members know, there are no enrolments into both the social work diploma program as well as the Bachelor of Education program. As we're going through this foundational review, we're going to be looking at things such as

governance, operations, academic program process, accountability, student recruitment retention. This is not a program review itself, but the recommendations are expected to help guide us for the future of how the college is going to be conducting its business. Following this foundational review itself, Mr. Speaker, and drawing on other supporting documents such as the Skills4Success, the labour market development, the labour market forecast, and needs assessment, we will start working on the strategic plan. It's during that strategic plan that we will determine the future of the program of the Aurora College.

MR. O'REILLY: I'd like to thank the Minister for his response. The Minister has been promising a legislative framework for post-secondary education in the Northwest Territories almost since the beginning of our term. I'd like to know what's happening. Can the Minister tell us where the post-secondary legislation is and when we can expect the introduction of a bill?

HON. ALFRED MOSES: I just want to update the Member. Once again, I did make a statement on this earlier in the session, but we are looking at possibly getting a draft bill in late 2018 or possibly early 2019. As the Members know, there is a discussion paper and an executive summary on our website currently. Once that bill is drafted and we get input and feedback on the discussion paper, we're going to see other institutions outside Aurora College, such as the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning and College nordique francophone, are all going to benefit from such a legislation. Those are the timelines. I'm looking forward to getting feedback from residents, organizations, partners, and stakeholders across the Northwest Territories that have an invested interest in our post-secondary future here in the Northwest Territories.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I'd like to thank the Minister for that response. Yes, we really need to get that legislation before the end of our term.

Last fall in the House we changed our mandate for the 18th Assembly and we included a new section around the knowledge economy. I'd like to know what the Minister can tell us about his department. What specific work are they doing on developing a knowledge economy? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ALFRED MOSES: The Member in his opening remarks earlier talked about training and skill development. That is a focus of our department, but we work collaboratively not only within other departments within the GNWT but also business and other organizations on how we address that. I think it takes more than just the one department to look at addressing the knowledge economy.

One of the other mandates that has changed was working with the Department of ENR in terms of studying the feasibility of creating a Northern Centre of Excellence to support and promote such things as research, innovation, traditional Indigenous, and foster partnerships with other universities outside the Northwest Territories and other governments and other organizations. The GNWT departments are now working together to engage with external partners to study the feasibility of creating such a centre. I look forward to the outcomes of that study. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

