

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

**QUESTION 245-18(3):
GIANT MINE REMEDIATION PROJECT SOCIO-ECONOMIC BENEFITS**

MARCH 12, 2018

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I have switched this up a little bit. I did give the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources a heads-up. Earlier today I spoke about the poor efforts by the federal government to incorporate specific northern benefits targets into the contracting for the Giant Mine remediation. So I would like to know from the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources: what is he prepared to do to ensure that NWT, Ndilo, Detah, and Yellowknife residents and businesses benefit from the more than \$1 billion Giant Mine remediation? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, as the Members are aware, the contract, the main construction management contract, was awarded in December of 2017. The Departments of ITI, ENR, ECE, and Infrastructure, we have an interdepartmental working group. We have had some updates from the Giant Mine remediation project team on the procurement and the socio-economic issues, specifically with terms of reference for the main construction contract in addition to any other tendering documents. We have had opportunities to provide some input into the contract documents but not on the federal government process. Being early in the awarding of the contract, we will continue to work with the main construction manager to ensure that there are opportunities for northern workforce and northern skilled people to be working on the project.

MR. O'REILLY: I would like to thank the Minister for that response. The federal government, though, just does not seem to have any policies or ability to require northern and Indigenous benefits targets in the contracts for the Giant Mine remediation, so can the Minister tell us whether there has been any consideration given to flowing the work and/or funding through GNWT to better incorporate such benefits targets?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Indigenous involvement in the project is considered through the use of the Aboriginal opportunities consideration within the federal government processing system, and we will have to work with the contractor to ensure that they recognize that there are a lot of folks up here who can do the work and try to utilize them. I think it would be beneficial for the project and beneficial for the locals.

As far as flowing the money through the GNWT, I mean, it is a federal responsibility, the cleanup of Giant Mine. I take the Member's point, though, where we would be much more recognizing of the fact that we need a lot of northern involvement. I can assure Members that we have had some updates from the contractor. I am sure, as we go into the process, we will have more updates from the contractor, and we will continue to

make our views known. I am sure, it just being awarded so recently, there is still some work they have to do in identifying potential businesses that they could utilize during the construction of this or the remediation work that is going on. As we become updated, I will keep the Members of this House updated, as well.

MR. O'REILLY: I would like to thank the Minister for that. I am just worried, though, that, with the \$600 million contract already out there, that this is starting to slip away from us. So, later today, I am going to table a letter from the Giant Mine Oversight Board that is quite critical of the current approach on socio-economic benefits by the federal government: there is no overall plan; engagement is encouraged instead of real targets; non-Indigenous Northerners have not been included in the approach to date; no economic impacts are predicted; and so on, but, perhaps most importantly, a collaborative consultative process is recommended to develop a socio-economic benefits plan. Does the Minister support a broad consultative process to develop a socio-economic benefits plan for the Giant Mine remediation project?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We are always supportive of anything that allows us to take advantage of northern business opportunities. The Giant Mine remediation is very complex in operations, so, as I said before, we will work before with the main construction manager. We will make our views known. I am sure they are doing their due diligence now. If there are opportunities to utilize northern businesses as part of the remediation, then it would benefit both the project and the northern business. Again, we realize that there is a lot of money that is being put into this remediation, and I will assure the Members that, between me and the Ministers of ITI and all other departments in the interdepartmental working group, we will reach out and see if we can get some information as quickly as possible. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I would like to thank the Minister again for that response, but, you know, this remediation project is clearly the beginning of a lot more work that is going to happen here. Clearly, there is an emerging remediation economy that, given the requirements of the devolution agreement and new accounting practice where containment sites are entered into public accounts as liabilities until they are remediated, I am wondering what our government is doing in terms of things like possibly reorienting the Mine Training Society towards remediation. What are we doing in terms of trades apprenticeships and so on? Can the Minister tell us what the GNWT is doing to get better prepared for the coming environmental remediation economy and how we can better get prepared for all the remediation work that's about to begin over the next several years? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Member's point is well taken. We do recognize that there is a remediation economy that is coming. I think we have seen a demonstration of that on the Canal Trail, for example, but that one, too, they brought, I believe, a southern company in, and that was through the federal government.

We have to ensure, and as much like HazMat remediation in units that were built a number of years ago, we see that as another economy because the Housing Corporation unfortunately can't take down a lot of their houses until they have HazMat

remediation. I do know a few businesses that have taken some HazMat remediation training, which is good. I think, as we get into more of the environmental remediation, the remediation type work, we should encourage more business out there to seek the expertise that they can take advantage of all the work, because I think I heard the Member say at one time there were like 700 sites that may need to be remediated. We need to position the people in the Northwest Territories and the business in the Northwest Territories. I think it's a broad discussion we need to have as a Cabinet if there are any training opportunities that we could possibly have or people taking across the Northwest Territories, so it is a whole new economy, and I think we need to position ourselves and our people to be the ones that are best prepared for it. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.