

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

MEMBER'S STATEMENT ON CONCERNS REGARDING GOVERNMENT OF THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES- SPONSORED PRESENTER AT AME ROUND-UP CONFERENCE

March 15, 2018

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Our government is sponsoring a disturbing talk at the Association for Mineral Exploration Roundup Conference that took place in Vancouver in January. This talk is still available on the Internet. The event was billed as an "Indigenous partnership breakfast, an event celebrating Indigenous participation in mining and exploration." The speaker from BC said a number of things that I have tried to highlight word-for-word:

- "People want to talk about negotiating treaties. We have been at it for 35 years [and] should be able to settle it now."
- "Non-Canadian money and non-Canadian interests come into our Aboriginal communities and use First Nations to stop economic development without really looking at our issues. Instead, they promise eco-jobs, tourism, green-energy futures. Everyone is going to be working. Everyone is going to get lots of money, but as soon as they stop an economic development project, they leave town, and they are never coming back. These are well-funded organizations that have big offices in Vancouver, big offices in the US and all over the place, but they leave the minute that they stop your project. Your band members receive nothing. Maybe a few people get funded. Maybe a few of them get cash awards. Maybe some of your leaders get rich from some of these environmental organizations."
- "These environmental organizations divide communities. They put Native against Native in terms of violence, in terms of vandalism, and they know this. They don't care about your community. I am seeing this all across BC."
- "Also, what they do is set up your community to go to court either against their own people, against their own system, against the corporations, against the government, and then they will just sit by and intervene on a separate topic. It is all part of their plan to stop the growth of BC and Canada."

Those are the end of some quotes, Mr. Speaker. It was notable that our Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment, in thanking the speaker, said that it is "important for us to push back on the naysayers."

While I and others in this House enjoy a healthy debate on the future of the NWT, for our government to sponsor such inaccurate, divisive, and hateful views is very disturbing.

I will have questions for the Minister of Industry, Tourism and Investment on whether our government shares these views and whether there is any evidence of these non-Canadian environmental organizations in the Northwest Territories or the criminal activities that they are alleged to support or instigate. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.