

**ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE**

**QUESTION 297-18(3):  
SLAVE GEOLOGICAL PROVINCE ROAD**

**MAY 25, 2018**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. While we are on the subject of roads, my questions are for the Minister of Infrastructure, who is the proponent for the Slave Geological Province Road. A business case for the project has not been completed. There is no independent cost-benefit analysis, either. The federal government has denied funding in our most recent application. Can the Minister tell us what is the status of this project? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As the Member stated, we were denied funding in the first round of the National Trade Corridors Fund. One thing I want to make light of that is there were over 300 applicants right across this country for this funding and a \$2 billion fund, which I have always said at the FPT tables we could spend the whole \$2 billion. We are competing against all of Canada for a small pot of money. That is not saying our project is any more or less desirable than any other one, just that there is a limited amount of funding.

We believe there is a second round of funding for this pot of money coming out this fall. It will be specific to the three northern corridors to carve out of the \$400 million. We will be resubmitting our application to that when that call comes out. We believe that our application will have a very positive chance of being accepted through that process on the second round.

The other thing I think we need to be well aware of is that we have an opportunity now. I don't know if all the Members have seen that as of yesterday, they have appointed a CEO to the Canadian Infrastructure Bank. This project has a revenue-generating potential. We believe it has a good fit in the Infrastructure Bank. We will continue to pursue those opportunities as things move forward.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks to the Minister for that. Earlier today, I questioned our government's fiscal capacity to take on this \$540 million project. Given our borrowing limit, competing infrastructure priorities, what evidence can the Minister provide that our government has the fiscal capacity to initiate the SGP road within the term of the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** It is very unlikely that construction of the Slave Geological Province would happen in the life of this Assembly. The project is dependent on, as I have said, securing federal funding. It also needs to have fully considered the social and economic impacts through an appropriate environmental impact review and permitting process. We know that is going to be a very lengthy process. We will take advantage of funding opportunities that become available to us. As I have said, in the second round, we will submit our application.

With that said, though, the Government of the Northwest Territories' borrowing limit would have to be increased for our fiscal capacity to be able to do the Slave Geological Province. I believe the Minister of Finance has initiated some initial discussions around that.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I would like to thank the Minister for that new information. Earlier today, I referred to the incomplete and unfunded work on the Bathurst caribou herd, that there is no land use planned for this region. As the lead Minister on this project, can the Minister explain to the public how Cabinet applies the Land Use and Sustainability Framework to the Slave Geological Province road?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** As most Members know, this Slave Geological Province access corridor is currently in the very early planning stages. The application of the Land Use and Sustainability Framework will be the key next step to advancing and planning of this project once federal funding has been secured.

As we move forward, we know that we have to have considerations for land use, protection of wildlife, economic opportunities for this project. We will provide involvement of Indigenous organizations and ongoing development of this project as we move forward on it. 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 for that. I might be able to help him with that with my next question here. I mentioned that the Government of Nunavut and even the Kivalliq Inuit Association have stopped work on the Grays Bay Road and Port Project so they can cut their losses short. When will our government cut our losses short and stop the use of public funds for the Slave Geological Province Road?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** With that said, we know the Kitikmeot organization is still very interested. There has been some discussion going on, how they want to participate and support not only their road but ours. I wouldn't say that it's totally dead on that side of it. We know that the Government of Northwest Territories has identified the Slave Geological Province in our mandate. We are all well aware of that and around our 25-year transportation strategy, we heard from Northerners that this is a high priority. Most members agree with me that this is a key to the future of our territory around economic development and support residents to adaptive impacts of climate change, to help create economic growth and prosperity for residents in the Northwest Territories and Indigenous governments. We are committed to making this project a reality. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.