

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT MEETINGS IN SAHTU

May 28, 2018

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. The Standing Committee on Economic Development and the Environment met in Norman Wells May 8th to the 10th, my first visit in about 25 years.

We met with the Sahtu Secretariat Inc. and the Norman Wells Land Corporation. I learned a lot about the implementation of the Sahtu Agreement. We met with the Norman Wells Chamber of Commerce. While there is a strong interest in the Mackenzie Valley highway, people are also interested in economic diversification, particularly tourism and what the Doi T'oh Territorial Park and Canol Heritage Trail can bring to the region.

We met with Imperial Oil representatives, including some officials via video conference from Calgary. They said the company intends to continue production once the pipeline is fixed later this year. There are also some tremendous opportunities with remediation of the Imperial Oil facilities. The NWT has the potential to build a remediation economy if this is done right, with coordinated community oversight and capacity building.

We also had a visit of the new Sahtu Got'ine Regional Health and Social Services Centre that includes a long-term care component. It is a fabulous facility that will employ 70 people when it is fully operational, more than the Imperial Oil operations at Norman Wells.

We also had a tour of the new Canyon Creek road, the beginning of the Mackenzie Valley highway from Norman Wells. This project has been spaced out over two years to allow for the region to take better advantage of the employment, training, and contracting opportunities. This is the kind of road development I can support.

The standing committee also conducted some strategic planning, given the pre-glacial pace of bills from our Cabinet colleagues. Our committee has had only two bills to deal with in over two years. We need to set our own priorities to accomplish something for the residents of the Northwest Territories. Committee will be addressing procurement practices, considering ways for developing a knowledge economy, exploring options for improving the NWT's resource revenues, and more.

Thank you to everyone for sharing their issues and concerns with us. In particular, I would like to thank the Sahtu MLA for help with many of the arrangements and connections we made. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.