

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

QUESTION 329-18(3): CARBON PRICING

MAY 30, 2018

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Finance on the issue of carbon pricing. I would like to start with something simple. The federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada wrote to all her provincial and territorial counterparts on December 20, 2017. She requested a response by March 30, 2018 on whether each jurisdiction would implement its own carbon pricing scheme or rely on the federal government. Last time I asked the Minister of Finance, in April, we still had not responded, so can the Minister tell us and the general public if he has written a response, and, if so, can he table it in this House without delay? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Finance.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, we did send a letter to ECCC with our planned approach to carbon pricing, and we also told them that we do not intend to use their backstop. So we will be having discussions going forward, and, when we are in a position to, we will release the results of our findings.

MR. O'REILLY: I would like to thank the Minister for that information. He did not answer the last part of my question, whether he was willing to table that letter in the House without delay, so I would like to repeat that question.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I will be making it available to the public, including tabling. I can table the letter, but what I need to do before that, out of respect for a consensus system, is share. We have a briefing with committee, and I want to give committee an update before I am in a position to release anything publicly.

MR. O'REILLY: I look forward to the briefing and getting the letter tabled so that we can tell the public what is going on. Our government apparently participated with federal government experts to prepare some sort of a study on the impacts of carbon pricing on the Northwest Territories. Can the Minister tell us whether that study has been completed and, if so, when it will be publicly released?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Mr. Speaker, there was a lot of work that went on on carbon pricing since the federal government came up with the initiative to implement carbon pricing, whether it was welcome or not. Our challenge was to do a lot of work, a lot of background work, to see what the effect would be on the people of the Northwest Territories and try to mitigate the effect on the people of the Northwest Territories. I think we have come up with a fairly good proposal in doing that. That is why we told the federal government that we will not be using their backstop. We did some numbers using their backstop, and it was going to add on to, significantly, the cost of living in the Northwest Territories. We have a product that is made in the North, by Northerners, and I think it will be well received by Northerners. Because the carbon pricing was going to be implemented with or without our participation, our challenge was to mitigate the

impact it was going to have on Northerners.

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 response, but he did not answer the question, again. This study that was done in collaboration with federal government experts on the impacts on the Northwest Territories of carbon pricing, is it done, and, if so, can he share it publicly?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: I will share anything publicly, but, out of respect for the consensus system, I need to share the information with committee first, because we have seen what happens if we somehow release some information to the public before we get it to committee. So, once we have the discussion with committee and we have our discussion with Ottawa, I will be more than happy to release anything publicly so people out there can realize and know what a great job that the officials within the Government of the Northwest Territories did mitigating the impacts of carbon pricing on the people of Northwest Territories. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.