

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

**QUESTION 558-18(3):
CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE WATER LINE REPLACEMENT**

February 13, 2019

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Now that we have the Minister in such a helpful mood, I might as well go ahead with my questions. In my Member's statement, I raised the issue of GNWT's support and assistance with the replacement of Yellowknife's potable water line. I'm sure the Minister has received the January 10th letter from the mayor of Yellowknife. Can the Minister of Infrastructure say whether he or his staff have had any discussions or meetings with the City of Yellowknife, and describe the outcomes? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, I can one-up that. Myself and the Minister of MACA actually met with the SAO and the mayor of Yellowknife and had this discussion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Well, while we're on a roll, the municipal funding review conducted in 2014 shows that the City of Yellowknife is underfunded by the GNWT to the tune of about a million dollars a year, based on its needs and size. This is apart from the proposal for the replacement of the existing Yellowknife River water stores pipeline. Has the Minister of Infrastructure had any discussions with his colleague, the Minister of Municipal and Community Affairs, about Yellowknife's potable water needs, and if so, what was the outcome of those discussions?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: At that meeting we had discussions with the mayor and the SAO, and the department and ourselves have had some conversations since. We know the City of Yellowknife, and our department actually has helped them do their application to Infrastructure Canada for the Federal Disaster Mitigation Fund. I believe they had that submitted sometime in January, if I remember correctly the date. They have submitted that, and we have helped them with that.

The departments have talked to each other a little bit. I know the Minister of MACA was off to another federal FPT and was going to have brought this up at the FPT, table some discussions to try to bring back some more information on how we can work with the City of Yellowknife and what other options are available for the City of Yellowknife's water line replacement with the federal government.

MR. O'REILLY: The Minister is just full of good news today, and I sincerely thank him for all of this. I'll keep pushing him a little bit harder. Our government, we're always bragging about how many federal infrastructure programs are out there, all the applications we've got in, and so on, and thanks to the Minister for his assistance with the application that the city has submitted, but can the Minister tell me: are there other federal infrastructure programs available to the city and/or our government to help assist with the cost of this water line replacement?

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: As far as I know, the Disaster Mitigation Fund is one of them. I don't think the federal government has come out with round two of the Clean Water and Waste Water Program yet, but I don't know if that would even be able to meet the expense that this would be, because this is in excess of millions of dollars. I think it needs \$28 million, if I remember the number correctly, to replace this line.

As I have said, the Minister of MACA was going to look into other opportunities, what the city could do. One of the things that was discussed briefly is the YK Dene is tied to this situation, if there are other opportunities with the federal government around what their involvement would be and what kind of federal dollars would be available if they were included in this process.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks to the Minister again for that. To help refresh his memory, it's \$33 million for the water line. As almost half of the population of the Northwest Territories is served by the Yellowknife River water system, can the Minister commit to continue to work with the City of Yellowknife and maybe even submit its proposal for a new water line as part of our infrastructure submissions to the federal government? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. WALLY SCHUMANN: For sure, I will be working closely with the Minister of MACA and following up with the mayor and the SAO of Yellowknife. This is an important issue for them going forward. We know this is something that needs to be replaced in the near future, if not sooner than later.

The big thing about chasing federal dollars, and one of the things that both of us, between myself and the MACA Minister, are going to have to do, is they have a certain lens on different types of applications and we're going to have to see whether this can actually dovetail into those opportunities that may lie out there, and we will certainly be chasing those for this particular project. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.