

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

RESOURCE ROYALTIES REPORTING

February 21, 2019

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. On October 31, 2018, I asked a written question of the Minister of Finance requesting the value of annual production by individual non-renewal resource commodities extracted in the Northwest Territories from 1999 to 2017, along with royalties collected on such production by individual commodities. On February 12, 2019, the Minister tabled the production figures as requested, based on publicly available information compiled by Statistics Canada. The royalties collected; however, were only supplied for 2014 to 2017 and aggregated by oil and gas and then by minerals for 2014 and 2015. The figures for 2016 and 2017 were a total for all royalties collected on all non-renewable resources, with a note that the "values are suppressed due to confidentiality requirements." No explanation was provided as to why earlier figures were not given and why royalties were not broken down by commodity type, as requested.

Last week I tabled excerpts from a privately published book by a former GNWT deputy minister and devolution negotiator that shows royalties and other fees paid to the federal government for oil and gas and minerals from 1980 to 2009. It is not clear why the Finance Minister did not provide similar information in response to a written question from a Member of this House when a retired GNWT deputy minister has the data at his fingertips.

Mr. Speaker, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative was started in 2004. It is a partnership among governments, companies, and civil society. A global standard to promote the open and accountable management of oil, gas, and mineral resources has been developed and adopted by 51 countries.

The standard requires the disclosure of information along the extractive industry value chain from the point of extraction to how revenues make their way through the government and how they benefit the public. The initiative and its standard seeks to strengthen public and corporate governance, promote understanding of natural resource management, and provide the data to inform reforms for greater transparency and accountability in the extractives sector. Canada is a supporting country, along with others, such as the US, UK, Scandinavian countries, and other European states.

The corporate sector also supports the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, and those supporters including Anglo American and Rio Tinto, which are owners and operators of two of the three NWT diamond mines. Private multinationals seem more committed to transparency than our Cabinet.

What democratic government doesn't support openness and transparency in public reporting of resource royalties? I will have questions later today for the Minister of Finance. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.