

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

QUESTION 647-18(3): DEVELOPING A KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

March 5, 2019

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. Earlier today I discussed the presentation made by Hotii ts'eeda for their great discussion paper on the knowledge economy. The Minister of Environment and Natural Resources has the lead for our government on the knowledge economy, and I would like to ask him for an update. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Minister of Environment and Natural Resources.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In the 2019 draft main estimates, which we are debating in Committee of the Whole, for Industry, Tourism and Investment, they have identified some money for work to begin on April 1, 2019, on a strategy to advance the knowledge economy. My understanding is that a project manager has been hired and work is under way. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that. I am wondering whether the Minister or his staff have had a chance to review the discussion paper by Hotii ts'eeda on building the knowledge economy and how they intend to respond to it.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: We welcome any work towards advancing research priorities of the knowledge economy in the North, including the recognition of social developments and health, the importance of multiple knowledge and informing research in economic diversification. As to the Member's question, I could not tell you off the top of my head if we have had an opportunity to review that. I will find that out, and I will get back to the Members. If there was some work done towards it, and if there was an opportunity that we had to address it and review it, I am not aware of that, but it may have been done, so I will follow up and inform the Members.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks to the Minister for that. To help him with his homework, I am going to table the document a little bit later today. That trusty mandate tracker website shows that the knowledge agenda action plan was supposed to be released in the fourth quarter of 2018. Can the Minister tell us why it has been delayed and when the public can expect to see it, hopefully in draft form?

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The work on the knowledge economy continues to progress appropriately. ITI, from my understanding, is working on the background research to support the development of the draft framework for the advancement of the knowledge economy, and we are hoping to have this work done by the winter of 2019 for review by the next government. That goes towards the Member's question.

It was supposed to be a mandate item in this particular government. However, there is still some work that we need to be doing. As I said in my Minister's statement before, some of the work that we are doing on the on-the-land program is, starting this month, we will be holding some open houses with communities across the territories to get input on the on-the-land unit and some of the initiatives that we are working on. For this particular issue that the Member is raising, my understanding is that we are hoping to

have the work done for review by the next government.

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 was hoping that we were going to get to the work on the knowledge economy a lot sooner. It was something that we added to the mandate at mid-term. There may be a chance to talk about this again tomorrow. Again, that trusty mandate tracker shows that there is supposed to be a proposal developed for a northern centre for sustainability and community resilience. Can the Minister provide a status report on the development of this proposal, including how much funding has been secured? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. ROBERT MCLEOD: The Departments of ENR and Education, Culture and Employment are preparing to undertake a feasibility study in 2019-2020 for the northern centre of excellence. In light of the recent Aurora College foundational review, it was determined that the scope of the feasibility study would be revised to consider the outcomes of the Aurora research review. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.