

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE

QUESTION 655-18(3): ARCTIC AND NORTHERN POLICY FRAMEWORK

March 6, 2019

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I did take the Minister's advice and give the Minister a heads-up about the questions I am going to ask today. In my statement, I raised some questions and points about the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. Can the Premier provide an update on the status of his involvement in this federal policy? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. The Honourable Premier.

HON. BOB MCLEOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the Member for giving me advance notice of his line of questioning. In this case, the federal government has not provided any updates on the validation document or the timelines for the release of the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework as a whole. We have asked for clarification, but have heard only that the final document will likely be ready in May of 2019.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Premier for that information. All MLAs received a copy of the submission from Alternatives North on the latest draft of the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. Can the Premier confirm what other submissions have been received and how he intends to share them with MLAs and the general public while incorporating that input into the final speaker?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I have received comments from the standing committee, both during a briefing on February 28th or 26th and in written correspondence from the committee. I have also received input from stakeholders since the briefing. Further comments are expected this week from Indigenous governments and also francophone organizations, which receive the translated document later than other stakeholders, primarily due to translation. The comments will be incorporated into the document over the next week and shared with Indigenous governments, standing committee, and stakeholders.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Premier for that commitment to share that correspondence with standing committee. I look forward to seeing that. The introductory chapter of the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework starts with "healthy and resilient people" and then has a focus on sustainability. The NWT chapter, though, starts with mega projects and more non-renewable resource developments. Can the Premier explain why there is not a better balance in the NWT chapter, with some coverage of the potential of the conservation economy and the knowledge economy?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: I don't believe there is imbalance, but, as I said, we will see what Indigenous governments and stakeholders have to say. Committee has provided positive feedback in this regard, and this is currently being considered, and we will take feedback and develop another draft and share that draft with Indigenous governments, standing committee, and stakeholders. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Premier for that commitment to share the next draft or version with standing committee, as well, and I look forward to the opportunity to provide further comments. However, on the face of it, the NWT chapter looks a lot like the pan-territorial vision for sustainable development, and that was just developed by the three northern premiers, without any public input. So can the Premier explain what's happening in terms of collaboration with Indigenous governments and the governments of Yukon and Nunavut to develop a balanced, forward-looking Arctic and Northern Policy Framework?

HON. BOB MCLEOD: The Government of the Northwest Territories has held engagements for the development of the Northwest Territories-specific chapter in January of 2018 and has been working with Northwest Territories Indigenous governments through the intergovernmental council. In February of 2019 we shared a draft Northwest Territories chapter with Indigenous governments and the territory. At the same time, we are working on a pan-territorial [chapeau] with the governments of Yukon and Nunavut and will share that document with standing committee once a consensus between the territorial governments is reached. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.