

**ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE**

**QUESTION 852-18(3):  
SMALL-SCALE HYDROELECTRICITY FOR TLICHO COMMUNITIES**

**August 23, 2019**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Later today I will table information on costs of mini-hydro projects for the Tlicho communities of Whati, Gameti, and Wekweeti. I shared this information with the Minister of Infrastructure earlier today. These projects would allow each community to meet its energy needs, offset diesel for electricity, and could displace home heating oil while significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the cost of living. Is the Minister aware of these mini-hydro studies, and can he tell us whether the cost of these mini-hydro projects is comparable to the proposed Whati transmission line?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Masi. Minister of Infrastructure.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I'm well aware of these projects. These were led by the Tlicho Government. Costing goes back as far as 2009, and these things would have to be re-costed to present-day costs to compare it to what the present line that we are proposing in our energy strategy to connect Whati, which we haven't defined, as we discussed in this House yesterday. I can't compare the costs.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that response. It's my understanding that the costs for some of those projects may actually go down with an all-weather road providing easier transportation. Can the Minister tell us whether there has been a comprehensive evaluation of energy options for the Tlicho communities that include mini-hydro, transmission lines from various sources, greenhouse gas reductions, and most importantly, perhaps, value for money?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** I don't have that detail in front of me, but what I can tell you about this project is that, if we connect the transmission line to Whati, we're going to eliminate 475,000 litres of diesel fuel annually. We have to look at this situation. Maybe the Member is not well aware, but what he's not thinking about in the short term is joining this transmission line to the community of Whati. The long-term goal, if the Tlicho Government and the Government of the Northwest Territories decide to go ahead with the Lac La Martre project, which I would assume would be at some point for future growth and supply and help resiliency in the North Slave, the line would help look after that.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that information. Of course, we may be able to reduce or eliminate all the diesel for the three Tlicho communities for the same cost as building the line that the Minister put forward in the Infrastructure Acquisition Plan. Given that there hasn't been this evaluation of options, why are we proceeding with a transmission line?

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** I think I have to clarify here. Maybe the department has done it; I just said that I don't have that level of detail in front of me. We can certainly

have a look and check with the department if they have done that cost analysis. As I have said, we believe in the short term to join the Whati to the Snare system through our transmission line, and once potential growth in the region and industrial development happens, the Whati would certainly feed into that growth and help stabilize the North Slave grid.

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

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Yesterday the Minister said that this Whati transmission line is about displacing diesel and "potential economic development in that region, and we will have to build in some capacity." All I am asking, Mr. Speaker, is that our government be open and transparent about the purpose of the Whati transmission line. Is this transmission line the best option to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, who benefits, and does it deliver value for money? Can the Minister tell us whether there will be a contribution from Fortune Minerals, or is the Whati transmission line a subsidy for the proposed NICO mine? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. WALLY SCHUMANN:** Clearly, what we have laid out in our 2030 Energy Strategy is how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the Northwest Territories. Part of that strategy is a T-line to Whati, no different than the T-line from Hay River to Fort Providence and Kakisa.

We will have to continue to look at ways to grow our economy in the Northwest Territories and, at the same time, honour our commitment to the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth. This is what we have come forward with. We went out and reached out to all of the communities when we did our Energy Strategy, and this is one of our plans going forward to be able to accommodate and meet our obligations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.