

**MEMBER'S STATEMENT — KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**FOOD SECURITY IN THE NORTHWEST TERRITORIES**

**March 10, 2020**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. As noted by my colleague, the Member for Yellowknife Centre, the Northwest Territories Bureau of Statistics released additional data from the 2019 community survey at the end of February of this year. I'll focus on food security, because I find those results particularly shocking.

In 2018, 3,407 NWT households, or 23 percent, reported that they were often or sometimes worried about having enough money for food in the previous 12 months. Many of these households also stated they had difficulty making ends meet, with 12.5 percent reporting both food insecurity and general financial insecurity. Food insecurity among NWT communities ranged from 9 percent in Kakisa to 60 percent in Behchoko. Many of our smaller and more remote communities are having a difficult time putting food on the table. Paulatuk, Ulukhaktok, Hay River Reserve, Wrigley, and Behchoko all have 50 percent or more of their households worried about food.

It is totally unacceptable that people in the NWT are going without food. Planning and building roads, where less than 50 percent of the workers are Northerners, is not going to solve this problem. NWT residents need food security programs and supports, housing, and education. Put people first, Mr. Speaker. Building food security in our communities cuts across our government and should include actions such as:

- making more land available for agriculture and production;
- training in local gardening and food preservation;
- better support for food harvester support programs and inter-settlement trade;
- review of regulatory barriers and gaps to allow for sale of locally produced food in the Northwest Territories; and
- a real Nutrition North program that moves from rewarding retailers to supporting local food producers and consumers.

I'll have questions later today for the Premier on what our government is doing to build food security in the Northwest Territories and how our efforts will stop people worrying about where their next meal is going to come from. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.