

ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE
QUESTION 203-19(2): COVID-19 AND THE TIMELINESS OF UPDATES

March 13, 2020

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. My questions are for the Minister of Health and Social Services. Mr. Speaker, I just checked the coronavirus special webpage on the Department of Health and Social Services website, and the last update there is yesterday at 9:08 a.m. That's more than 24 hours that it's been without an update. Can the Minister tell us what the plans are to actually update this webpage? Look, our residents, they want timely information. We want to make sure that we instill a sense of public confidence and that we have regular updates. What are the plans to update this webpage? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Health and Social Services.

HON. DIANE THOM: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just reached out to my department and I have been recently informed that the website hasn't been updated since yesterday, and we are working on that and we will have something ASAP. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. Can the Minister tell us, though, what is going to be the regular schedule for updates? Is it going to be once a day? Is it going to be more than once a day? If the situation starts to change, what will be the schedule for updating the webpage and getting timely information out to our residents?

HON. DIANE THOM: We don't have a schedule now, but the website will be updated as required. So, if there is pertinent information that needs to be put out there, we will have it updated, but we will work on a schedule.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Minister for that. Can I just make a suggestion that the schedule itself actually be posted to the website, so our residents know when it's going to be regularly updated and whether it's once a day? I hope it's a little more often than that. Look, I was looking at a Johns Hopkins University website that shows coronavirus around the world. It's updated regularly, live. I want to get a commitment out of the Minister that the schedule for updating is actually going to be put onto the website itself so that our residents know what the frequency of the updates is going to be.

HON. DIANE THOM: I think that's an excellent idea from the Member, and that is something we will have a look at, to make sure that the residents of the Northwest Territories know when things will be updated to the website.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Minister. Final supplementary, Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. I hope that she more than just looks at it; that she actually directs her staff to do this. I would like to know from the Minister whether there are any changes from the last posting to the website, which shows zero cases of coronavirus in the Northwest Territories and 54 persons being tested. Is there an update that the Minister can provide us right now? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. DIANE THOM: As of now, there is no update. We still have no cases in the Northwest Territories, positive, from our results of any coronavirus here in the Northwest Territories. I would also like to let the Members know that we will have a briefing with our Chief Medical Health Officer after we're done session today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.