

**KEVIN O'REILLY - MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**Committee of the Whole—2019-2020 Operating Budget Review**  
**Culture, Heritage and Languages – March 3, 2020**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. I'm just wondering if the Minister or staff can tell us about the feasibility study to retrofit the museum. What is the status of that work, and is there a plan to actually retrofit the museum? I know we're talking about the O and M budget, but I think this feasibility study was partly funded out of the O and M budget last year. Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, and I appreciate the Member bringing this up. I know he has always been a strong advocate for the museum and all it does. As many of the Members know, the museum is getting on in age right now. I did a tour of there not long ago. There are sections of it where there are dehumidifiers that have to be emptied nightly by security guards. The space is an issue. The Prince of Wales Heritage Centre serves a central agency function for the GNWT, storing many of its archives, so we have a lot to store. In addition to all of the cultural treasures that we have in the territory, there are just a lot of documents, and space has become an issue.

As to the feasibility study, I know that is a capital issue, but perhaps I could have my assistant deputy minister, Mr. MacDonald, elaborate on where we are with that.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. MacDonald.

**MR. MACDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. At this point in time, ECE has completed the functional program assessment of the facility, and we are looking at different alternatives for what the new facility would look like. We are hoping to have a schematic design as well as class D estimates in place by April 2020, this spring, and present that to our Minister for discussion and for some direction for us to proceed after that. Thank you, Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Mr. MacDonald. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks to the Minister and his staff for that information. Can the Minister commit to sharing that study with the standing committee, and options that the department might come up with, before they go to Cabinet for a final decision? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. Yes, that can be shared with standing committee. I think it likely has to be shared with the Cabinet, but not for decision, prior to going to standing committee, but I have no problem doing that. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I really appreciate that. I guess one of the things that is sort of in the back of my mind is the fact that we don't have a territorial visitors' centre. If anybody has been to Whitehorse, they actually have a spectacular one that is right in their downtown area, and it does serve the interests of the whole Yukon. Is there some thought being put into, perhaps, different partnerships or co-uses or however we may want to frame it, in terms of other government needs, given sort of the central location and the function that the museum has played over the years in terms of tourism and so on? Can the Minister tell us whether those sorts of possibilities are being looked at? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Anything is possible, but for details on what sort of discussions have happened, I will turn it over to my deputy minister, who is well versed in that. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. MacDonald.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Sorry, my deputy minister, Ms. Mueller.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Deputy Minister.

**MS. MUELLER:** Thank you, Madam Chair. As the Member knows, right now our museum is very well visited over the year. Many, many tourists, many of our NWT residents have pleasure in going into that beautiful facility, but, when looking at the future, there is a lot of possibility to even create more spaces, in a variety of ways, that would be open to the public and also to specialized groups, arts groups and so on, so that is being discussed. Primarily, though, a lot of the work that has been done to date is really looking at the functions and the requirements that we have for archives and for the collections that we have and ensuring that we have the proper air systems and so on, so that is really an important feature of our discussion to date. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Deputy Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, I guess the other thing that is sort of bubbling away in the back of my mind, too, is that, with a polytechnic university on the horizon, Yellowknife does need a real campus and that it would be great to be able to combine maybe the sort of things that could and should happen in a polytechnic with some of the things that do happen at the museum, as well. Because there is certainly a lot of interest in language revitalization, and the museum and some of the staff there do take strong roles with that, given the artifacts and some of the heritage items there and so on. I hope that is something else that the department will consider, is links with a potential polytechnic university. Is that something I can get some comment on? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you. The Member was talking about synergies between a polytechnic university and the museum. I haven't really put much thought into that, but I think that would be an avenue, perhaps, to pursue, especially in terms of capital funding. You know, the federal government or other entities might be more open to supporting a museum project if it does have that association, given that there is also a research component, as well. The territorial archeologist is in that facility, as well.

I just want to temper everyone's expectations here, that this would not be a cheap build. We have a lot of needs in the territory, and a building of this magnitude, that has to be built to these specifications, would be quite expensive, so I am not saying that this was going to happen anytime soon, even though something has to happen soon, but I just want to let the Members know that this is not a done deal and that it's going to be a large, large expense if it happens. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, and I take what the Minister says, that there are some very specialized requirements for a museum. There is also a great example in Whitehorse where Yukon archives are co-located with the Yukon College. They have an arts centre there. It's a wonderful kind of facility. It's a little bit out of the downtown area, but I think there is another example of how we can do things. I just want to move on to one other question, and that is the name of this facility, the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. Is that something that we might look at, you know, finding a better name for, something that reflects our culture here more appropriately? Thanks, Madam Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Madam Chair. That, it seems like it would be a simple fix, but for some of the details on this, with your indulgence, I would like to hand it over to Mr. MacDonald.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Minister. Mr. MacDonald.

**MR. MACDONALD:** Thank you, Madam Chair. This is definitely an interesting question in terms of protocol. One of the things that we have wanted to look into is whether a name change for the facility would trigger any issues with His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, other issues such as that, so, from a protocol perspective, we are still in the research stage, to try to understand what that would entail and who to actually speak to. However, we are hoping to wait until after there is a bit more clarity on the planning study, itself, before we really dive into some of those questions. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Green):** Thank you, Mr. MacDonald. Do you have any further questions, Member for Frame Lake?

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Madam Chair, no, other than I appreciate the information that has been provided by the staff. They know that I am a strong supporter of the facility and the functions that it performs, and I look forward to the next phase of the life of that particular institution. Thanks, Madam Chair.