

**ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**QUESTION 226-19(2): MANDATE LETTERS FOR MINISTERS**

**May 26, 2020**

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Mr. Speaker, and I'm sorry I didn't give the Premier a head's up, but it's on the list for today. I'm wondering if the Premier can tell us whether mandate letters have been prepared for each of the Ministers? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Premier.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, absolutely. Mandate letters were done, painfully, again. At the beginning of this Assembly, first of all, it was identified which Ministers would take over the priorities in the mandate, and from the mandate exercise we developed mandate letters. We had made a commitment that we would be sharing that with the standing committee. When we were almost ready, it was in my inbox waiting for me to give final, and COVID-19 hit. With COVID-19 we stepped back and we said, "Do we need to add in this COVID-19?" My first gut was just to add in COVID-19, you've got to do it, but then my staff challenged me, and rightfully, and they said, "Is life going to be the same after? With this COVID-19 are we going to have the same programs?"

We actually went through and again we just spent the last little while going through our mandate. It's not as bad as we thought. We're ready now to give out the mandate letters based on how they were before, of course, with a little inclusion of COVID-19. I believe, again, that we've offered it to standing committee. If we haven't offered it, I will make sure it's done in the next day or two. The next step is to present it to MLAs, and I promise to get their feedback on that.

MR. O'REILLY: I thank the Premier for her forthrightness. I had understood that copies of these letters would be provided to the standing committees before they've been finalized. That's what I had understood was supposed to happen. I know COVID, and so on, but here we are more than two months late, and the Premier is saying that the letters are finalized. I haven't seen these letters. When is the Premier going to provide these letters to the Regular MLAs, or at least to the standing committees?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you for pointing it out. That was miswording. The letters have been done. They've gone through me. The commitment has been to share it with Regular Members, and that, I will do. No Minister at this point has received their mandate. They've got a first draft of it that they were allowed to provide feedback on to me. At no time have they gotten it. The work is done on my side. My commitment before, and I'll honour that commitment, is to provide it to MLAs for their feedback. The commitment was that we wouldn't negotiate, that it would be feedback, and I would take that. Once I listen to that feedback and decide what is done, at that point I will be handing those letters to my Ministers, hopefully within the next couple of weeks.

MR. O'REILLY: I want to thank the Premier for clarifying that, and I'll stand down a little bit, myself. I guess I had misinterpreted that to say that the letters have actually been finalized. I understand that they are in draft form. Can the Premier confirm when she intends to share these letters with the appropriate standing committees?

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Things have been going really fast over the past few months, really fast the last few weeks, so I was under the impression that we had already done it. My commitment is, if we haven't already done it, that I will be providing those this week. I know my staff is listening. They're jumping on it right now.

MR. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Premier. Final supplementary, member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Premier for that, and I look forward to getting these letters, seeing them in draft form. It's customary for these in the last Assembly and in the federal government, they make the letters public, and I assume that the Premier is going to do the same thing. The reason why I'm so interested in these letters is that the mandate, the priorities we develop, don't actually cover a lot of what some of the Ministers may have to do. Can the Premier tell us whether these letters contain work for the Ministers to do that might be outside of the actual mandate? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Yes. The mandate letters do identify some of the normal day-to-day operations that would be expected. It does focus on the mandate. There is a section on COVID-19, and there is room where we can actually tailor it. However, I must point out that every single duty that I expect from our Ministers will not be in that mandate letter. It is not possible. I would have to write a book to do that. There are other ways to make sure that Ministers do their jobs, such as why we are here. There is the BF system, where people ask, enquiries. There's walking into offices, talking to Ministers, and challenging on the floor, and that's what we're all here for. The mandate is one tool. It is not the only tool. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.