

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

**QUESTION 299-19(2): Socio-economic Benefits of Giant Mine Remediation**

**June 4, 2020**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, monsieur le President. I don't think that I have had the pleasure of asking the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources about benefits from the Giant Mine Remediation Project, but he sat next to me in the last Assembly, so this won't come as a surprise. The Giant Mine oversight board is again making recommendations about securing northern benefits. The remaining expenditures during active remediation are the equivalent of spending on another Stanton hospital. Has the Minister read the most recent report from the board, and does he support the recommendations? Masi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister of Lands.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Right here, and I have another copy right here. Yes, we did receive it. It was brought to the front desk here. We have looked at it. So the Member is aware, the department and the project team are currently in the process of viewing the Giant Mine oversight body 2019 annual report, and the GNWT and CIRNAC will be responding to the report publicly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I have props, too, but I can't use them. The problem seems to be that no one is taking the leadership and responsibility to ensure that Northerners, especially Indigenous peoples, do not continue to lose out from the tragedy that is Giant Mine. Can the Minister tell us what specific action over the last year his department and others in the GNWT have taken to secure northern benefits?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The Member did give me a heads-up on this, so I'm going to read from my notes so I can give him exact information. The Giant Mine Remediation Project has developed a socio-economic strategy, which is currently in place to maximize benefits for Indigenous and Northern businesses. An implementation plan is currently being finalized for the strategy. ENR, ITI, ECE participates on the senior socio-economic advisory body at the senior deputy minister's level with CIRNAC, the City of Yellowknife, the DFN, North Slave Metis Association, and Alternatives North. In 2018-2019, total dollars spent by the main construction management, Parsons Canada, totalled \$28.77 million. Of this amount, 91 percent went to Indigenous suppliers and northern businesses. For Indigenous governments, it's \$22.69 million or 79 percent, and for northern business it's \$3.45 million or 12 percent.

**MR. O'REILLY:** I want to thank the Minister for that. I'm just going to get a little more personal here. Can the Minister tell us what he has done personally and whether he has raised the issue of northern benefits with the federal Minister of Northern Affairs and if not, why?

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** The GNWT, through the Department of ENR, is a co-component of the Giant Mine Remediation Project. I have and will continue to advocate and promote northern benefits for this project.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. Oral questions. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister for that. The federal Minister of Northern Affairs was here several months ago. I had asked whether you had a chance to meet with him, but I can take that offline. The remediation of Giant Mine has the potential to allow the NWT to develop and expand remediation economy, given the number and scale of contaminated sites across the NWT. This should also be one area of focus for the polytechnic university. I suggest in this House, Mr. Speaker, that the GNWT should seek an accelerated federal investment in NWT contaminated sites to help with economic recovery. Can the Minister tell us what he has personally committed to do on the Giant Mine remediation file over the next year? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. SHANE THOMPSON:** We continue to work with the Giant Mine Remediation Project to find ways to develop new skills and provide access to jobs related to the cleanup of Giant Mine. Conversations between Giant Mine Remediation Project and contaminated sites staff are taking place this week to continue to explore linkages and promote economic opportunity for Northerners. In addition, the department continues to work with other GNWT departments to secure federal funding to support remediation of contaminated sites to support economic recovery efforts in the NWT. The department is continuing to work in partnership with CIRNAC and Public Services and Procurement Canada to ensure Northerners, Indigenous communities benefit from federal procurement process. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.