

THIRD READING OF BILLS —KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

BILL 22: SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION ACT (INFRASTRUCTURE EXPENDITURES), 2021-2022

November 5, 2020

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Range Lake, that Bill 22, Supplementary Appropriation Act (Infrastructure Expenditures), 2021-2022, be read for the third time. Madam Speaker, I would request a recorded vote. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER: The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Frame Lake.

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Madame la Presidente. I recognize that I'm one of the few things that is standing in the way of a much-needed break for us all, so I'm going to try to keep my remarks pretty short here. There was a very significant announcement by the Minister of Finance in the House yesterday. It's largely gone unnoticed by the public and media. That was some changes that the Minister agreed to make moving forward as a result of our discussions around the 2021-2022 capital budget. There was \$15 million added to the Northwest Territories Housing Corporation budget over three years to help leverage the federal co-investment fund, \$60 million carveout. We also agreed that there should be a \$2.5 million one-time increase in the municipal infrastructure funding for 2021-2022. I want to sincerely thank all my Regular MLA colleagues for our work together on these priorities and to our Cabinet colleagues as well. Moving forward, this is the kind of collaboration I want to encourage and work towards. This is how consensus government can and should work.

People know that I tend to be a fairly stubborn, principled MLA. I want to make some remarks about the capital budget itself. Of course, it's the largest ever, and I'm quite concerned with the direction that it is taking. I don't think even the Finance Minister is entirely happy with it. I think this is really what I might categorize as a bad hangover from the last Assembly of overspending on capital, and capital not necessarily in the right areas. I support a lot of the spending in the bill, but we need to find a better balance between the programs and services and for our people and the large infrastructure projects. I don't think we've achieved that with this capital budget. Therefore, I will not be voting in favour of the bill, but I look forward to a better balance in the next capital budget. I'm happy to be part of a more collaborative process moving forward. Thank you, Madam Speaker.