

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Sunsetting Equity Lease Administration Program
Committee of the Whole—2021-2022 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Lands—February 24, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. One of the earlier speakers mentioned the elimination of the equity lease administration line for 2021-2022. This was a program that was announced with much fanfare by the previous Minister and was supposed to go on for I think five years. Is this ending early, and have all of those leases been inspected now and they've all been transferred to fee simple ownership? Is that what has happened? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: It is being sunsetted, so it is done. The funding of the program has been sunsetted. As for the number of leases or equity leases out there, I think the deputy minister talked about a number of them already going through the process, but all of them, no. They are not all done, but we are able to provide services from our existing staff to fulfil that mandate to complete that task. The task has not completely been completed, but we are working to get that done. For further clarity, if I missed anything, with your permission, I will ask the assistant deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Chapman.

MR. CHAPMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Minister has stated, we are in the process of trying to work through these. I think one of the questions the Member had asked is whether or not inspections had been completed at all of the various leases. Yes, they have been, on all the parcels, so we had all that work completed by end of summer/fall of 2020. We have that information, that baseline data that is on each and every file. We have gone out with letters to the existing lessees to notify them of getting into the next stage of this process, which would be potentially moving toward fee simple title, which will, again, as I mentioned earlier, involve the process of consultation with our various Indigenous governments and organizations. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Mr. Chapman. Member.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Can someone just give me a rough figure? Like have 50 percent of these been converted now to fee simple title, or 10 percent, or 3 percent? Can I just get a rough figure of how many of these equity leases have actually been converted to fee simple title? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll turn the floor to the assistant deputy minister. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you. Mr. Chapman.

MR. CHAPMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. At this point, we've sent out 150 letters to the

lessees in this process, to which we have heard responses, as of earlier today, from 46, and we will now be moving toward fee simple with those individuals. Not everyone who we've engaged with seems to be as eager as others. There are some who are certainly moving much more quickly than others. When it comes down to the specific that the Member has asked, the question of how many have transferred to date, we have transferred only one at this point in time, but a lot of that is due to a variety of different aspects that are within the lessees' control, as well as our own, to move through the land titles process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.