

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
ATIPP Implementation
Committee of the Whole—2021-2022 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Justice—March 3, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I have a couple of questions here. There were some media reports about, basically, implementation of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act. I had understood that regulations were required first before the full changes that were passed in the last Assembly, almost two years ago, could be brought into force. Perhaps the Minister can provide some clarification of where we're at with the implementation? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. The privacy office, which has been centralized in Justice, which we will be coordinating, not necessarily doing all the leg work for all of the departments, has come into effect this month. That should help the GNWT provide more, I don't want to say more streamlined, but I am trying to think of the right word here, coordinated requests. What we are seeing is that there are not more access to information requests; there are more complex requests coming through. That requires a lot of time from departments, so by centralizing this and creating a bit of expertise, the government is better able to respond.

The Member is correct in that the regulations are required for the amendments to the act to come into force. As I have said before in this House, we are still looking at this summer, and that has been a bit delayed with staffing issues in the ATIP office. There are some regulations that will be coming into force sooner. Those are the regulations to reduce some of the fees that are charged for ATIP requests, and those will be coming into force on Friday. Thank you.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that response from the Minister. Certainly, I pushed for him to separate the issue of reducing the fees from the other matters that need to be regulated, so I appreciate that very much. Can the Minister point to me, in the budget here, are there any additional resources, then, for Justice to carry out these additional coordination functions related to ATIP? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you, Member. Minister.

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. This has been the plan for some time, so those have been accounted for. Perhaps I can ask Ms. Bolstad. I know we had been delayed in implementing this, so I believe the funds were already in the budget. Ms. Bolstad might be able to add some more. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Ms. Bolstad.

MS. BOLSTAD: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, the additional positions for centralizing the ATIP requests were established in the 2019-2020 Main Estimates. Thank you, Madam Chair.