

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. I appreciate that. My last area of questions here is with regard to legislative drafting. I know the Minister and I had an exchange in the House the other day that was a little bit mischaracterized by some in the media. How many people do we actually have in the legislative division that support the development of legislation, or is this function actually in each of the departments? Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. Yes, the Member and I weren't at war the other day. We weren't taking shots. It was some good-natured ribbing. We were sort of trading war stories, if anything, from the last Assembly on legislation. Perhaps I can ask Ms. Bolstad for some of the particulars about how many people we actually have drafting. Thank you.

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

MS. BOLSTAD: Thank you, Madam Chair. There is a total of 11 positions within the legislation division. That includes the director, a couple of administrative staff, and then a few drafters, as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Madam Chair. Look, I don't want to drag this out, but has that capacity increased or decreased? Has it changed over time? As I said, I am happy that you guys come forward and ask for more resources here so that we can get more legislation before the House and committees. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. R.J. SIMPSON: Thank you. I am not sure about the historic numbers, but I think that part of the issue is the timing of legislation. We made it through the last Assembly, like it or not, with the outcome. We were able to do it, and I know that the drafters put in a lot of hours. We are hoping that, by controlling the flow of legislation a little better, we will be able to do a better job of managing their work loads. I am not sure if Ms. Bolstad has any of the history or the deputy minister. Yes, the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler): Thank you. Deputy Minister.

MS. DOOLITTLE: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yes, we do go forward when there is a need, and we track that, as well. We also have contract drafters that can assist us when needed, and these are in times of when it's very busy and legislation does need to get through. We use those contract drafters when needed. Thank you, Madam Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks. That's something I will just continue to keep an eye on, and I

want to thank the Minister and his staff for the collaborative exchange. Thank you.