

**KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE**  
**Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act**

**March 12, 2021**

**HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Nahendeh, that Bill 16, An Act to Amend the Income Tax Act, be read for the third time, and, Mr. Speaker, I request a recorded vote. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Minister. The motion is in order. To the motion. Member for Frame Lake.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Most Members will know that I am a man of principle, and I am going to stand on principle today with regard to this bill. Look, I support small business. You heard me earlier today make a Member's statement in support of the tourism sector. I spend a lot of my time in the south supporting small business. I am concerned, though, about the lack of effort on the part of my Cabinet colleagues to actually deal with the revenue side of our financial situation. I just don't really detect that there is much effort in a lot of work that is being done on the revenue side.

In discussing the bill here on the floor and in committee, I know now, and the public knows, that we are going to lose revenues as a result of this. We are going to lose \$1.4 million, but there is no effort being made whatsoever to try to replace that revenue. I made a couple of suggestions to the Minister: increasing the number of tax brackets for personal income tax, or even continuing the rental charges in the current exploration licence for Husky Oil into the significant discovery licence; easy ways to, I think, and certainly the second one, come up with the lost revenues here.

Perhaps even more importantly, for me, Mr. Speaker, this is an issue of fairness. I asked the Minister very clearly: why are we doing this? The response was so that we could remain competitive. We wanted to be in line with other jurisdictions. I don't detect that that fairness principle or concept is being applied across all of our tax regime. We have cherry-picked one item to make us all look very popular, and I just don't think that that's an appropriate way to go. I don't think it's even good financial management.

For all of those kinds of reasons, Mr. Speaker, I am going to vote against this bill. If some want to characterize this as me being anti-business, let them go ahead. This is about tax fairness and making sure that we replace the revenue and that we apply that concept of fairness across all of our taxation. The last thing I want to say is that this will not benefit businesses right now because it only takes effect on January 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. It's not going to help businesses with a big part of what happened with the pandemic. Maybe they'll get some tax savings at the end of this year. That would be helpful for them, but this is not about pandemic relief. Mr. Speaker, for all of those reasons, I will be voting against the bill. Thank you.