

MEMBER STATEMENT—KEVIN O'REILLY MLA FRAME LAKE

PUBLIC ACCESS TO PETROLEUM RIGHTS INFORMATION

March 31, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Merci, Monsieur le President. While attempting to drill down into the Husky Oil significant discovery licence, pun intended, I was astounded at how difficult it is to find any useful and accessible information about how our government actually administers oil and gas rights.

ITI does not seem to have implemented its new responsibilities with the changes to the Petroleum Resources Act. While much of the secrecy surrounding rights management was supposed to be fixed, it is virtually impossible to get any coherent information on specific oil and gas rights holdings. There are three separate listings or web pages for information on oil and gas rights rather than a user-friendly integrated database or public registry. There is a series of web pages on monthly oil and gas rights activities, which is little more than a listing of licence numbers and their disposition, no maps, no company names, no actual dates, just a lumping together of licence numbers. A second and unlinked set of pages has listings of the licences and the actual documents. The listings are searchable by disposition type and the name of the company, but there are no data associated with the listings, such as dates, areas covered, work performed, or whatever. Lastly, there is a series of dated maps that have tables of licence data that are not linked or user friendly. These come from the previous calls for expressions of interest in petroleum development. Those have all failed to raise any interest since devolution. Elsewhere, you can find the annual oil and gas reports, that have very busy maps in them, but none of this is linked in any way to the licence or activity listings.

Mr. Speaker, there is no searchable, user-friendly, integrated public registry for petroleum rights. Surely to goodness, seven years after devolution and 19 months after the transparency provisions were passed in the House to provide stronger accountability in petroleum rights reporting, we can and should be able to do a lot better. There are lots of good examples out there that show how transparent and well-organized public registries can be set up, for example the ones managed by the Land and Water Boards or the Mackenzie Valley Review Board. I will have questions for the Minister of ITI on how we can improve public access to information on petroleum rights. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.