

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Barren Ground Caribou Survey
Committee of the Whole—2021-2022 Supplementary Operations Expenditures
Budget Review
June 3, 2021

MR. O'REILLY; Thanks, Madam Chair. Yes, one of the items here is \$300,000 for the barren ground caribou calving survey. Given that it's June 3rd, I think this work might even be underway right now but I'd like to get some confirmation from the Minister about the status of this work. Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler); Thank you. Minister of Finance.

HON. CAROLINE WAWZONEK; Madam Chair, there's no way I would have let this one pass by without hearing from the Minister of ENR on this one, please.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler); Thank you. Minister of ENR.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON; Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. The work started Monday. The people are out there. We were able to work with the Hamlet of Coppermine, getting permission from the Nunavut government and their CPHO and the municipalities. So we have the workers out-- or the people out there surveying a herd presently. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler); Thank you. Member for FrameLake.

MR. O'REILLY; Thanks, Madam Chair. That's great to hear because I know one of the reasons why it's here again is because the work couldn't be done last summer with COVID restrictions. So can the Minister tell us when the department expects to have the survey results available to us as MLAs and for the public? Thanks, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler); Thank you. Minister of ENR.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON; Thank you. My understanding, with all the data and that, we're hoping to have it at the end of the summer but I will get back confirmation with that to committee. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Ms. Semmler); Thank you. Member for FrameLake.

MR. O'REILLY; Yeah, thanks, Madam Chair. And the reason why this is so important is the last time the survey was down, the herd-- or done, the herd was down to 8,200 animals compared to a high of almost 400,000. So this is a critical piece of information we need to make the best possible decisions about that area, including whether we should be building roads or not. Thanks, Madam Chair.

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

HON. SHANE THOMPSON; Oh, sorry. I didn't know if it was coming to me or. So, yeah, we're making sure that data is-- it's critical. That's why we were able to work with the Nunavut government and the hamlet of Coppermine to get the survey done, and it was

probably unfortunate because COVID. You know, it hit us last year but we're able to start continuing to manage our survey, moving forward. Thank you.