

**ORAL QUESTION—KEVIN O'REILLY, MLA FRAME LAKE**

**ORAL QUESTION 771-19(2):  
INCOME ASSISTANCE EMERGENCY ALLOWANCE**

**June 4, 2021**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Sometimes I don't say enough good things about my colleagues across the floor. So I want to congratulate the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment for increasing income assistance for some of our residents in the flood-impacted communities. I think that was a really good move on part of his department. But I'd like to know which communities are receiving the top-up. Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Thank you, Member for Frame Lake. Minister responsible for EC and E.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Under the income assistance regulations, the department can issue an emergency allowance to income assistance clients when there is an emergency. And in this instance, there -- the emergency allowance was issued to income assistance clients in Fort Simpson and zones 1, 2, and 3 in Fort Good Hope. There are no income assistance clients in Jean Marie River, otherwise we would have supported them as well. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. Thanks very much to the Minister for that forward-looking work by his department. I'm just wondering, though, is -- were these payments like one-time payments or are they going to be ongoing in some way? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The emergency payments are one time and so they were issued when the emergency occurred, and, you know, if you look at, like somewhere like Aklavik, it's my understanding that there hasn't been flood damage and power outages the way there has been in places like Jean Marie and Fort Simpson, and so the benefits haven't been issued there. But if that were to change, then I'm sure the director of income assistance would issue those benefits accordingly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Merci, Monsieur le President. I want to thank the Minister again for his response. I know that our colleagues on the other side have made commitments that we're going to get people back into their homes in time before winter, and so what kind of discretion is there recognizing that people -- some people are probably going to be out of their homes for a number of months. What kind of discretion is there to continue these top-up payments over a period of time and what sort of criteria would be used to trigger that action? Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.

**HON. R.J. SIMPSON:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So as I stated, they are the one-time emergency payments. So if there is a flood and the power goes out, someone loses all the food in their refrigerator. This is a one-time payment to help them buy food and

things like that. So there is no plan to continue these one-time payments. And as for additional flood relief, that is a different department. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.