

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
Disaster Compensation Fund
Committee of the Whole—2022-2023 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources—February 23, 2022

MR. O'REILLY: I want to move on to the disaster compensation fund. That's a grant; it's on page 74 of the Main Estimates. And I see that the actual amount for 2020-2021 was \$400,000. And I think this was as a result of flooding of Taltson and damage that was done to people's cabins and so on. So it's good to see that the amount has been increased to \$275,000 in this year's Main Estimates. But it's still not even what was paid out last year, or a couple of years ago. So why is this not increased to a greater extent than just the \$275,000, and what would happen if there's more claims than that submitted? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, so when we increased it, it's based on applications, when harvesters submit their applications, and that's how we come up with our numbers. Right now it's based on that. But for further detail, I'll turn to the deputy minister to explain if we have over-expenditure and what happens moving forward on that. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. ST. ARNAUD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We requested some additional funding to review this program. It's quite similar from a flooding aspect to one that we also have for forest fires, and we wanted to do a program review this year, which is ongoing, and we did request additional funds because of the flooding along the Taltson where we knew that we would require additional funds. So to date, there have been \$185,000 in claims related to the Taltson flooding. So the intent here is to review the program and make any adjustments that are needed and also to ensure that it's similar in nature to the fire one, the fire compensation program that we have as well. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Yeah, thanks for that information. So this review -- one of the questions I had was whether the criteria are going to change because I understand there's only some things that can get claimed. There's a maximum amount and that not everybody was necessarily happy with the amount that they received compared to the actual damages. So when is this review going to be finished and when will the criteria be changed? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Mahsi, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. SHANE THOMPSON: For that detail, I'll go to the deputy minister. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Bonnetrouge): Deputy minister.

MS. ST. ARNAUD: Thank you, Mr. Chair. We're working on the review right now. There are a number of criteria that were reviewed, and there were some criteria that for a specific purpose for the Taltson flooding were adjusted.

One of the things that we have here is this is for harvesters, and one of the criteria pieces, that 25 percent of your income needs to come from that. But we recognize in this day and age that many people are harvesting, but 25 percent of their income, it's quite a large amount. So we're looking at all of the criteria when we're doing the review, and we'll most likely adjust some of that criteria through the review process. Thank you, Mr. Chair.