

15th Legislative Assembly

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Relocation of the Territorial Treatment Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. An issue that's been really upsetting and unsettling for me is that of the proposed relocation of the Territorial Treatment Centre to Hay River.

During both the June and October 2005 sessions, I questioned how it was that the Department of Health and Social Services could move capital dollars and a project from one community to another without any consultation with affected Members or committees. Of course, Mr. Speaker, the government and Minister Miltenberger were adamant that every rule in the FAM directive was followed, but a very strange thing took place on the heels of questions about the project in June of last year.

The government went out and made some very substantive revisions to that very same FAM directive. Coincidence? I don't think so. Did they learn anything, Mr. Speaker? Apparently not. It is clear that the decision that was made by the Minister and government to relocate the program was based solely on political motives. The only notion that gave any legitimacy whatsoever to the move was the fact that Hay River had a building, the former Dene K'onia facility that the department was looking to renovate.

The Minister said it himself last October, and I quote, "the fact that it was cost neutral, there was already money in the capital budget that could be used to upgrade Dene K'onia, the fact that there was a facility." Those were, as the Minister stated, key factors in making the decision.

This spring it came as an absolute shock that an ad appeared to demolish Dene K'onia. This shocked parents of the children at the Territorial Treatment Centre, the staff at the Territorial Treatment Centre and Members of this House who, last year, were told one thing and this year we are going to be force fed a different scenario.

How could it be that the Minister and government, for the second time in less than a year, ignore its own FAM directive, did not consult, communicate or advise any Members of this House, even though a substantive key element to this political shell game had changed?

I am finding it very hard to believe that demolition and construction for this project can be completed for the \$3.1 million that is there. I am finding it even harder to understand why this program must even relocate, given the new circumstances that have arisen.

If you want to put a new residential treatment program in Hay River, then go ahead. Plan for it. No one is going to stand in your way. But, Mr. Minister, please, I implore you, revisit the decision to relocate the TTC. The factors are obviously much different today than they were last year. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

---Applause