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Stanton Territorial Hospital Deficit

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to speak today about Stanton Territorial Hospital. I want to address the deficit that is facing this hospital. As well, I want to clarify an item I mentioned on Friday during discussions on the supplementary appropriation act.

Mr. Speaker, I want to state, for the record, that on Friday I did mention that the Department of Health and Social Services had not informed the House that Stanton Hospital's deficit for 2005-06 was \$5.8 million. Mr. Speaker, upon further review, this information was in fact contained in the public accounts for 2005-06.

The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, the flagship of our health care system, Stanton Territorial Hospital, is awash in \$13 million of red ink – \$5.8 million in 2005-06 and another \$7 million in 2006-07. On Friday, through the supplementary appropriation, \$2.9 million, or half of the deficit for 2005-06, was approved. That leaves us now in a \$10 million dilemma. There is little doubt that the hospital has been chronically under funded for the past four years.

Many issues have been raised in the House in the areas of staffing, morale, cleanliness and laundry services. The Minister has an obligation to plan to address this deficit through working with Regular Members on the Standing Committee on Social Programs. It would appear that Stanton has been under funded and denied its request for proper funding and, Mr. Speaker, it is little wonder why there are morale issues and staffing concerns at this hospital.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Minister for disclosing the fact that, this year, the deficit is close to \$7 million at Stanton. I appreciate his honesty. However, we need to come up with a plan to fund that hospital more effectively. Requests for funding coming from the hospital have to be acted on in a manner that is more becoming of the essential service that it provides to this territory. The fear I have, Mr. Speaker, and all Members of this House should have, is that the department may now be looking at imposing a deficit recovery plan at Stanton.

Mr. Speaker, this would come after years of chronic under funding and this action would cause untold duress to this hospital. We need a recovery plan that includes increased funding for the future. We also need to be talking about ways in which we can make this the best hospital that we can. Mahsi.

--- Applause