

15th Legislative Assembly

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Relocation Of The Territorial Treatment Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Over the course of this short session much of our time has been spent reviewing the fate of the Territorial Treatment Centre. I have to tell you, Madam Speaker, that I am not very impressed with the process used by this government to get us where we are at today.

The Minister of Health and Social Services is presenting the transfer of the Territorial Treatment Centre to Hay River as a fait accompli. Bosco Homes, the contractor, seems to be onside. The only problem is those pesky Yellowknife MLAs who are concerned about whether the children will have access to the same level of services in Hay River that are available in a larger centre like Yellowknife, and whether the present staff at the TTC are being treated fairly.

The Minister of Finance is taking a very literal interpretation of the Financial Administration Act and the relevant Financial Administration Manual directives in relation to the government's duty to consult with the affected committee and the MLAs. I strongly believe, Madam Speaker, that while the Minister and his officials may have upheld the letter of the law by consulting with Members in committee through the introduction of a supplementary appropriation, they have, nonetheless, violated the spirit or intent of their requirement to consult in a timely manner.

The way in which this has taken place, the transfer of the TTC to Hay River lacks any transparency and accountability. Much has been made of the fact that we are only being asked to approve \$505,000 and that the rest of the funding for the Territorial Treatment Centre has already been approved. This is true, Madam Speaker. Both the previous Assembly and this very Assembly approved funding to replace the Territorial Treatment Centre in Yellowknife. Not in Hay River, but in Yellowknife.

The hands of the Standing Committee on Social Programs and of this Assembly are now tied. It would be almost irresponsible on the part of us all not to approve the spending on the Territorial Treatment Centre in Hay River for the 2006-07 year when we have already invested \$505,000 or roughly one-sixth of the total project cost in 2005-06.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would just like to reiterate that I am not opposed to the transfer of programs or decentralization where good or at least a reasonable business case can be made. I object to this government using supplementary appropriations to circumvent the review and oversight function that the committees provide on behalf of all the people of the Northwest Territories. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Hear! Hear!

---Applause