

# 15<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly

## Third Session

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### **Ministerial Responsibility For North Slave Correctional Centre**

**MR. RAMSAY:** Mr. Speaker, my statement today is about ministerial responsibility. Ministerial responsibility is a convention within certain democratic systems that defines ultimate accountability within government. According to the tenets of ministerial responsibility, Ministers are responsible for the actions of their department. This means if a department has been found responsible for a major misjudgment, responsibility falls on the Minister, regardless of whether he/she was involved or even aware of the situation. The assumption is that that is the Minister's job – to be aware and responsive to what is going on within his/her own department.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday, I asked the Minister of Justice to take responsibility for the human resource problems out at North Slave Correctional Centre. I asked him to offer an apology to the employees who endured the appalling treatment from management. All the while at the ministerial level, there was a complete denial of any wrongdoing or problems whatsoever. Even now that an internal review has made it clear that significant problems existed, the Minister still refuses to apologize.

Not only is that an insult to correctional workers, it's an insult to all Northwest Territories residents who have to foot the bill for this debacle. It is a substantial bill, Mr. Speaker. Together with some colleagues on this side of the House, I have previously asked the Minister to provide actual figures to account for the cost of mismanagement. In many cases, the government won't provide these actual figures, citing protection of privacy and confidentiality.

We do know that the Department of Justice spent \$216,395 on overtime for the period of one year leading up to May 31, 2004, and between June 1, 2004 and September 30, 2004, they spent another \$243,913 on overtime. From this we can see the department spent more on overtime for that three-month period than the normal costs for an entire year.

My simple calculations estimate approximately \$400,000, for the three of the nine wrongful dismissal suits that required compensation. We will never know the entire cost of the abuse of sick leave, stress leave and extended medical leave, but my estimation puts this figure at about \$500,000.

The cost of the review of the corporate human resources was probably \$200,000, the cost of Corrections Canada help in implementing the recommendations that came from the report and their ongoing support would be, at the very least, \$150,000. If you add these costs up, it totals over \$1.5 million, Mr. Speaker.

In addition to his official response in the House that there were no problems out at North Slave Correctional Centre, he repeatedly told me that there were many happy employees at North Slave Correctional Centre and that the review would prove that nothing was wrong.

My point, Mr. Speaker, is that the Minister refuses to take responsibility for what went on at North Slave Correctional Centre under his watch. The Minister should pay attention to the fact that, as a government, we have spent at least \$1.5 million as a direct result of the management decisions at North Slave Correctional Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I will be asking the Minister questions at the appropriate time.  
Thank you.