

15th Legislative Assembly

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MAY 27, 2004

Member's Statement On Delivery Of Health Services In The Yellowknife Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will be using my Member's Statement today to allow this House and the public to become aware of some ongoing concerns that I have with the Department of Justice and the Yellowknife Correctional Centre. The Minister is well aware of my concerns, but I feel I have to bring this to the attention of the Assembly to get some action on it.

In February, I received a petition signed by over 100 inmates incarcerated at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre. They cited some serious deficiencies with the delivery of health services at the centre. Upon receipt of this petition, I drafted a letter to the Minister asking for swift action to their concerns and that he keep me apprised of what was happening. I did receive a letter from the Minister stating that they would look into this problem in the near future.

On April 21, I learned through an outside source that, as a result of the petition, a service audit was commissioned by his department. The service audit was to be conducted by an outside professional from Correction Services Canada and the departmental corrections investigator. The audit has taken place, and I will have some questions for the Minister about that at the appropriate time.

I am concerned that I was not informed of this audit taking place. Because my name appears in the conveyance order for this audit, I should have been informed that it was happening and not have to find out through other sources.

Mr. Speaker, the concerns about the delivery of health services at the centre are coupled with many other issues at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre. The staff morale continues to suffer, even though most had hoped the change of scenery in the new building would help. My concern is for the safety of the staff and of the inmates at the centre. Under the current circumstances, it may be just a matter of time before a serious incident takes place. I will have questions about this at the appropriate time.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

--- Applause