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Stanton Territorial Hospital Accumulated Deficit

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, today I'm going to pick up again on the discussions regarding debt and deficit at Stanton Territorial Hospital. The Minister stated in the local media last week that the overall debt to pay back FMBS for covering the payroll for the past 13 pay periods, or six and a half months, is over \$26 million.

If you add that to the \$11.5 million of accrued deficit, it gives you a total of \$37.5 million. Given the reduction exercise the government is currently conducting and the scarcity of dollars to go around, I'd like to know where on God's green earth are we going to come up with \$37 million extra.

Mr. Speaker, in the same article I spoke of earlier, Minister Lee also said that there would be a supplementary appropriation bill coming forward during this session to deal with the payroll issue. I am left wondering whether or not that supplementary appropriation is going to be for \$11.5 million, which is the accrued deficit, \$26 million for the payroll crisis or \$37.5 million to address both issues.

I still have a difficult time understanding why this has been happening for six and a half months, and how long the government anticipates it to continue. If the authority is not paying the \$2 million in payroll back to FMBS, then where exactly are they spending the money? Are operations and cash flow so far off track at that hospital that this has had to be the case for the past six and a half months? I could understand one or two pay periods, but how can you explain 13 consecutive pay periods totalling \$26 million?

The department conducted a zero-base review at Stanton that began early in the spring of 2007. This was supposed to be a tool by which management at Stanton could make decisions and assist in the development of a balanced budget for 2008-2009. What kind of balanced budget can you get when you owe FMBS \$26 million to start off with, and another \$11.5 million deficit is staring you squarely in the face?

Mr. Speaker, I will again today have questions for the Minister of Health and Social Services on this issue at Stanton. Mahsi.