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Concerns Regarding North Slave Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to address some current issues at North Slave Correctional Centre, which is located in the riding of Kam Lake. I have spoken in the past of the number of inmates located at the facility that are on remand. Some have been there for close to 12 months and I just don't understand why we are housing inmates on remand for excessive periods of time. It was almost a year ago when I first brought the issue up to the Minister and it doesn't seem like things are getting any better.

Mr. Speaker, I am also very concerned over the fact that there is not even a small room that could be used as a library at the North Slave Correctional Centre. The government spent close to \$50 million on the jail five years ago and to think there's not even a small library is ridiculous. Inmates should be doing their time, but improving their knowledge and reading skills should be of importance to the Justice department and to our government, so that when they do get out of the centre, they are able to improve their chances at a job and productive lives, and not end up back in jail.

Over 400 books recently showed up at our local dump here in Yellowknife and it would appear that having a small library at the centre is not something the government supports or the department supports.

Mr. Speaker, that brings me to my last point and it deals with mental health at the facility. Over the past year, North Slave Correctional Centre has gotten rid of two clinical psychologists and today there are no mental health services on a day-to-day basis at the North Slave Correctional Centre.

Mr. Speaker, it seems like we are short-changing the rehabilitation of inmates at North Slave Correctional Centre. Last year, changes were also made to program delivery at the centre that, to me, again run contrary to what we should be trying to do, and that is give inmates the rehabilitation in programming they need to keep them from reoffending and out of our facilities.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister and staff should avail themselves to the Standing Committee on Social Programs, sooner rather than later, to discuss the issues that I brought up here today and to brief us on that. Mr. Speaker, I will have questions to the Minister at the appropriate time. Thank you.