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Psychiatric Assessment Capacity at North Slave Correctional Centre

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I would like to discuss an issue I have raised previously in this House, and that's how the Department of Justice, specifically Corrections, is short-changing the rehabilitation and services provided to inmates at North Slave Correctional Centre.

Mr. Speaker, two years ago there were two clinical psychologists employed at North Slave Correctional Centre. Today, to my knowledge, there is none. Mr. Speaker, the fact is, we are failing to get assessments done and work with inmates to ensure proper rehabilitation is done so inmates can transition back into society.

I'm deeply concerned that recently a convicted sex offender waited 11 months for a psychiatric assessment. How is this even possible, Mr. Speaker? Corrections – the Department of Justice and the Minister should be embarrassed for themselves. When the individual's lawyer is quoted in an article in last week's newspaper saying it will take some time, especially because it seems there is no system in place.

And not only are lawyers picking up on the lack of proper and timely psychiatric assessments, the Crown is also very concerned about the situation causing an individual to be, as they call it, "institutionalized" because they can't get access to the required assessments.

Mr. Speaker, this is completely unacceptable. I am very aware of what happened in the removal of one of the former psychologists at North Slave Correctional Centre and I want to know why we have not made any progress in bringing in a clinical psychologist to that centre. How many more inmates sit in remand and are awaiting psychiatric assessments?

Mr. Speaker, to me, this appears to be a gaping hole in the services that our largest corrections facility – North Slave Correctional Centre – has to offer inmates. After the way we treated the former psychologist at the centre, maybe it's little wonder why the Department of Justice hasn't got a full-time psychologist at the North Slave Correctional Centre and no -- I repeat, no, Mr. Speaker -- day-to-day services of a clinical psychologist at the facility, which, Mr. Speaker, I think is completely absurd. Thank you.