

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE

Young Offender Facility

Committee of the Whole—2016-2017 Operating Budget Review

Dept. of Justice—June 17, 2016

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Under "program detail" there's a line here for youth facilities and there's some significant changes that have taken place and I'm wondering if the Minister and his staff can talk a little bit about that. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Chair, the reprogramming of the youth facility will result in considerable savings, and that's the reason, as I understand it, for the reduction. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. And my apologies, I understand that one of my colleagues has raised this issue already, but at the risk of going over the same ground, what's the long-term future of that facility? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Chair, although the building is fairly old it's in excellent condition. I had the opportunity of doing a tour of the facility a couple of months ago. Obviously, there will be a continuing need to have that facility. We're not envisioning any change; there will always be a need for some facility such as that for youth. That facility seems to be in excellent shape and we're not contemplating any major changes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. O'Reilly.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. Are we going to be making more effective use of the facility? Are there other purposes that it can be used for? I understand that the number of youth offenders in there is not that great, which is a good thing overall, but are we able to repurpose parts of it or use it for other purposes to get some efficiencies? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, of course. For example, just as one change we've made, I designated it a couple of months ago as a facility in which women prisoners on remand could be held. This was a significant problem in Yellowknife. Perhaps Ms. Haener can expand on my answer, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Ms. Haener.

MS. HAENER: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The facility was constructed as a youth facility and we have an obligation to ensure that youth are held separately and apart from adults, and as well, to protect the privacy and the identity of those individuals that are held in that facility. So it is difficult to repurpose a facility of that kind. As the Minister indicated, we have taken one part of the facility and designated it as being available to house women on a temporary basis.

There may, in future, be opportunities to look at other things such as more links with communities and utilizing the staff and the resources at the facilities for those types of things. We're certainly engaged in

that kind of activity in Fort Smith, for example, where there are considerable partnerships with community organizations to support programming both in and out of the men's and the women's facility there, and that may be something that could be explored in the future. Thank you, Mr. Chair.