

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE

Law Library Report Release

Committee of the Whole—2016-2017 Operating Budget Review

Dept. of Justice—June 23, 2016

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I guess this is the section where the contributions of the Law Society and the NWT Law Foundation are shown towards the court library over the years. There was a commentary piece on CBC by a local lawyer that talked about how there was a 2012 special committee of the Law Society that was set up to make recommendations on the court library and they came up with a number of recommendations to actually reduce the costs of the library but it doesn't appear that any of those were actually implemented. I'm just wondering if anybody from the department can talk about what happened with that special committee and why none of the recommendations were followed up. Thanks, Mr. Chair. At least in the opinion of this individual. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Mr. Chair, I know that there were efforts over time to reduce the costs, but in 2012-13 the Department of Justice in cooperation with the Law Society, as was mentioned by the Member, and the Law Library committee performed two comprehensive surveys of members of the bar to identify subscriptions that could be cancelled, so some were cancelled. Expenditures did drop in 2013-14 but then they jumped again by \$47,000 in 2014 and \$75,000 in 2015-16. The acquisition costs, and mainly here we're talking about subscriptions to services, continue to increase at a rate that bear no connection with the CPI. And I was reading somewhere I think that last year we sent \$350,000 to major publishers in the GTA, the Greater Toronto Area, so there were efforts to keep costs under control. They obviously were not as successful as we would have hoped and costs continued to escalate far beyond the rate of inflation. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr Chair. Could the Minister undertake to provide a copy of this report from the Special Committee of the Law Society that I think it was submitted in 2013, and then if there was a departmental response to the recommendations, could he also provide that to the appropriate standing committee? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I'm not certain that we could share that very easily. I think we would need the consent of the Law Society perhaps and the judiciary also. We could approach them, but I'm not certain what their response could be. So there's parties beyond us that would have to agree to release the report. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So would the Minister commit to see if that might be possible? And then I promise I'll leave him alone about this for a little while, not too long but a little while. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Certainly, Mr. Chair, I could commit to doing that. Thank you, Mr. Chair.