

**KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE**

**Law Library Transition to Research Centre**

**Committee of the Whole—2016-2017 Operating Budget Review**

**Dept. of Justice—June 23, 2016**

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think where we ended off on Friday was I was asking the department some questions about the court library. I understand that the Law Society of the Northwest Territories and the Northwest Territories Law Foundation have made significant contributions towards the operation of the library over a number of years and so it's quite an investment on their part. Would the Minister be prepared to meet with the Law Society and the Law Foundation to talk about the future of the facility? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Sebert.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes, Mr. Chair, the situation we're envisaging for the future is to have a resource centre. Certainly, when we are discussing such a project, we would be discussing that with the Law Foundation, Law Society and the local bar. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Sebert. Any further questions, Mr. O'Reilly.

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the commitment from the Minister to meet with the Law Society and the Law Foundation about the court library and its future. Would the Minister also commit to bring forward a plan or maybe a transition plan for the court library into this resource centre, and would he be prepared to bring that plan forward to the Standing Committee on Social Development? Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Sebert.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Mr. Chair, once we decided that it was advisable to close the current facility, we're looking at of course a resource centre as part of our legal outreach. There's many issues that have to be determined; the type of centre that would be, where it would be located, and so on. We will of course consult with those parties when we are deciding what kind of facility would be most suitable. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Sebert. Any further questions, Mr. O'Reilly?

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Again, I appreciate the commitment of the Minister to meet with these interested investors in the court library. Would he be prepared to bring forward a plan to the Standing Committee on Social Development on how the court library is going to transition into this research centre? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Sebert.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** We would be prepared to do that, Mr. Chair, because we're always interested -- those are important investors, as was mentioned, in the resource centre, so we would be prepared to appear before Standing Committee to discuss the resource centre. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Sebert. Any further questions, Mr. O'Reilly?

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. And I appreciate the commitment of the Minister to appear before Standing Committee with this plan. Would that plan also include what is going to happen to the books and the resources that are actually in the court library? And the reason why I mention this is that it's my understanding that there are some volumes and some information, some documents, books in there that are the only known copy on this planet, and they are of a great historical value for people that would want to do research on the history of the Northwest Territories, our legislation and so on. And I know that our library here at the Legislative Assembly already has a bunch of stuff in storage underneath the post office. And I'm not sure that there's been a real plan for what's going to happen with the resources of the court library. So in coming forward to Standing Committee, would the Minister also include a plan for what's going to happen with the resources that are currently in the court library? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Sebert.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes, Mr. Chair, those elements of the collection that are deemed to be of historical value would be identified and retained with the Department's legal division or considered for transfer to the archives or the Legislative Assembly Library. The remaining collection would be offered for donation to other NWT libraries or disposed of by gift to law firms or possibly by destruction. It is expected the bulk of the collection will likely be offered to the resident lawyers on a first come first served basis. I understand that is what took place when the library was downsized to its current size, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Sebert. Any further questions, Mr. O'Reilly?

**MR. O'REILLY:** Thanks, Mr. Chair. Look, I'm not trying to push this too hard, but can the Minister commit to talking about that plan with the Standing Committee when he brings forward information about how the court library is going to transition into the research centre? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister Sebert.

**HON. LOUIS SEBERT:** Yes, I can commit to do that, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Blake):** Thank you, Minister Sebert. Any further questions, Mr. O'Reilly?

**MR. O'REILLY:** No. Thanks, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the commitments made by the Minister, but I do need to go on record as opposing this cut to an important public service. Thank you, Mr. Chair.