

**Consideration in Committee of the Whole of Bills and Other Matters
Capital Budget—Dept. of Justice
Legal Library Resource Centre**

September 27, 2017

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. I think it's been almost a year and a half now that we have the proud distinction of being the only jurisdiction in Canada without a court library and without any public access to it. The money in this portion of the justice budget for the courthouse structural upgrade, is any of that for this legendary public resource centre? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

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

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I will give some brief outline about the resource centre/library, and then if I may defer to my deputy minister here.

Now, the old library on the first floor is still open to lawyers and others by appointment. I think they've only had one non-lawyer, one or two at most, seeking to get into the library. It's not as though there's nothing there. We are making plans for a resource centre.

Perhaps at this point I could turn the matter over to Mr. Goldney and he could provide some further information. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Mr. Goldney.

MR. GOLDNEY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As the Minister mentioned, the previous space that was occupied by the library is now serving essentially as a scaled-down resource centre. Members of the bar, as the Minister mentioned, have access and continued 24/7 access with a fob. For members of the public, there's a notice there. Court staff can provide them access upon request, and so they wouldn't have to wait. They would just have to make that request. As the Minister has noted, there's been one person since we've closed the library doors and restricted access who has made such a request.

The plans were always to scale down the physical space itself, and it was tied to the renovations of the courthouse. That budget is there. The challenge that we ran into is that, when we were looking at changes in the lobby of the courthouse, it was quickly identified that there were some structural concerns and upgrades required before we could make the space to provide a more scaled-down physical space for that resource centre. That did, and does, require consideration of further investment, which is part of this budget. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair. When can we expect this resource centre to actually open its doors to the public? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: As mentioned, the current library, of course, is open to the

public. Opening a new resource centre will depend on the nature and type of renovations that we decide to do, if any. As has been mentioned, the issue of renovations appears much more complicated than we had originally anticipated. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Mr. Chair, I'm not sure that was actually an answer. Are we talking about 2019, 2020, 2023, that people are going to have to wait to see what this resource centre is going to look like and have access to it without having to call somebody and arrange for someone to come down and open up a door? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, Mr. Chair. The money for the new resource centre, as I understand it, is part of the 2018-2019 budget, but I think the point is that there won't be a period of time where there will be nothing. If we do move to a new resource centre, we're hoping it will be a seamless transition from the old library. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Thank, Mr. Chair. Yes, I think I've heard the words "seamless transition" from the Minister before in a different context, so I'm not sure I want to go there.

Can the Minister commit to provide a bit more of a plan for what this resource centre is going to look like, when it might be open, and what actually happened with the materials and with the court library? Can he give us a written update? I don't want to prolong this, but can he commit to give us a written update and a plan for the resource centre? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you, Mr. O'Reilly. Minister, the Member is asking for a written update. How do you respond?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Yes, we can provide a written update.

I just want to point out, however, that it's not as though any of the materials in the whole library have been disposed of to this point. The full collection is there. It's not being updated as it once was, admittedly, but the old collection is still there. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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

MR. O'REILLY: Great. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Yes, in giving us that written update, if you can talk about the transition from the court library to the resource centre as well, that would be great. Any idea when we might be able to get that update? Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Simpson): Thank you. Minister.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I believe we could get that update quite soon. The complication, as I said, was that the renovations that initially seemed to be fairly straightforward are going to be more complicated, but I will provide the update as requested. Thank you.

