

ORAL QUESTION—JULIE GREEN, MLA YELLOWKNIFE CENTRE

**QUESTION 12-18(3):
CONCERNS OF NORTH SLAVE CORRECTIONAL COMPLEX INMATES**

October 18, 2017

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Justice regarding the recent influx of complaints from the NSCC inmates. As I mentioned earlier, an open letter accompanying a total of 69 letters containing general and specific complaints has been received by the Minister and many of us.

To start with, can the Minister explain what processes and mechanisms are in place to receive and resolve complaints at NSCC? Mahsi.

MR. SPEAKER: Minister of Justice.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I can advise that monthly meetings are held with the Inmate Advisory Committee at NSCC, the IAC, to discuss inmate concerns and other issues or requests. I understand that there was a recent meeting, and at that meeting there was no insight received by the staff, at least, to the concerns presented in these letters, but there are provisions for the inmates to meet and air their concerns? Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MS. GREEN: Thank you to the Minister for that response. It seems that the complaint mechanisms involve having the inmates talk to the very people who they may, in fact, have complaints about. Is there any third-party complaint process where inmates can go to someone who is not directly involved and make their concerns known?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I am not certain, Mr. Speaker, of any formal process. Clearly, if there were human rights violations or serious problems of that type, concern could be made to human rights. Legal counsel could be contacted and they could make their concerns known to me.

MS. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Minister has given any thought to having some kind of a third-party complaints process. It just seems to me that, if the usual route is for the complaints to go right back to the warden, it is not likely to result in a resolution. Short of going through the legal route through the human rights process, would he consider another third-party method of assessing complaints?

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I had not really considered this idea. Perhaps it does have some merit. I had been under the impression that the Inmate Advisory Committee, IAC, meetings were working well, where there was a full and open discussion regarding issues. Yes, we can certainly consider that idea. I don't think currently we would have a process in place, but I would be willing to look at it.

MR. SPEAKER: Masi. Oral questions. Member for Yellowknife Centre.

MS. GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's willingness to look at

how these complaints are dealt with and how they might be dealt with more effectively. My final question has to do with programming. We understand the recreation position has been cut, that the arts and crafts room have been closed, and outdoor access is limited by the issues related to fencing. What kind of recreational programming is in place for inmates? Thank you.

HON. LOUIS SEBERT: I understand that two recreation officer positions are being converted into correction officer positions. This allows for greater interaction with the correction officers and inmate in a different and more relaxed environment. Corrections officers from each of the pods provide supervision at recreation activities as part of their regular duties. I understand that that would include as follows: each pod has access to a gymnasium daily; inmates have access to the visiting room/multipurpose room outside of the pods on a daily basis; and inmates continue to have access to exercise equipment, basketball, volleyball, and floor hockey. The manner in which the programs are delivered may have changed, but the programs are still available. Thank you.