

**THE HONOURABLE LOUIS SEBERT
MINISTER OF JUSTICE**

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North Slave Correctional Complex Inmate Concerns

Mr. Speaker, last week an unprecedented package of 70 letters from inmates at the North Slave Correctional Complex were addressed and delivered to myself and several MLAs.

These letters outlined common themes that focus on issues surrounding programming at the facility, as they work to make positive changes in their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that these concerns from inmates are not being taken lightly. I have directed the department to respond to each of these letters without delay. In fact, last week, the Warden of the facility has started to have direct conversations with the inmates regarding these concerns.

We have a well-established process within each of our correctional facilities for inmates to raise concerns, and report back on how they can be addressed. I can confirm many of the issues that have been raised in these letters have not been brought forward through the inmate advisory committee meetings.

This does not mean that the inmates' concerns raised in these letters are being discounted. As I have said, we will be communicating with inmates to ensure that they know how they can access programs, as well as how they can continue to prepare to reintegrate back in their community.

Mr. Speaker, within our correctional facilities, programs have been created to allow offenders to help address the root causes that lead an individual to criminal behavior. Programs are delivered in a way that recognize the importance of culture, and take into consideration the short time that most territorial inmates are incarcerated.

We have not reduced programs available at the NSCC. In the past three years, we have seen 330 inmates access or enroll in educational programs at NSCC. Since April 2014 to today, 278 inmates have completed a variety of programs including sex offender programs, and the new modular programs to address Violence Prevention, Substance Abuse Management and Respectful Relationships. In addition to these core and educational programs, 11 other programs, including Alcoholics Anonymous and the John Howard Society workbook series, are offered.

An Adult Literacy Basic Education program is also available for those needing this support. For others who may be a few courses away from their high school diploma, teaching staff will work with them to work towards obtaining required credits. This includes access to the regular high school curriculum.

A traditional counselor continues to offer cultural programs within the facility, while the larger yard security issues are being addressed. This restriction of use of one outdoor area is time limited. It is expected to be re-opened by the end of the year once necessary security upgrades are in place.

Members are aware that we have challenges in the North delivering programming to inmates due to the average sentence of less than three months. For most, it can seem like they just get started, and then their sentence is complete and they are released. Since I have been Minister of Justice, new modular units of programming were created taking into consideration the sentences of our territorial inmates. For example, with the support of trained probation officers, work to address violence prevention, respectful relationships and substance abuse management is able to continue in the communities.

Mr. Speaker, I am ready to work with any Member who needs more information in order to assist their constituents' concerns. These inmates need to know they are not left without resources. I commend them as they try to better themselves, and I am committed to ensuring they know how to access the tools that are in place to allow that to happen. Staff in our Corrections services are dedicated to providing the safe and secure custody of inmates, and supporting the successful reintegration of inmates upon their release. I look forward to working with all of you as we continue this work.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker