



MR. KIERON TESTART
MLA, KAM LAKE

FEB 08 2017

**Response to Oral Question 497-18(2):
Expanded Role for GNWT Court Sheriffs**

On February 2, 2017 you requested information on the potential for an expanded role for Sheriff's Officers in managing the transportation and escort of offenders. The Sheriff's Office has proposed the establishment of two additional Sheriff's Officer positions in the budget currently before the Legislative Assembly. These positions were put forward as forced growth to address pressures on the Sheriff's Office resulting from increased numbers of court sittings and continuing demands for civil enforcement.

The Department of Justice and the RCMP have formed a committee to review the current practices and to recommend the most effective model for escorting prisoners to and from court in Yellowknife. As a result of this work both the Departmental and the RCMP representatives concur that the Sheriff's Office should have responsibility for prisoner escort within the Yellowknife courthouse, including the cell area, and the Corrections Service should continue to provide transportation of offenders between the North Slave Correctional Complex (NSCC) and the Yellowknife courthouse. The committee produced an options paper in September 2016 and has been forwarded to the Deputy Minister of Justice and the Commanding Officer of "G" Division for their review and decision going forward.

A change of this nature will necessarily require considerable advance work on policy and procedural updates, and staffing and training following a successful submission to the Financial Management Board. Implementation in early 2018-19 would be feasible.

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Statistics gathered by the Department for fiscal year 2015-16 show the number of remanded prisoner transfers between NSCC, Yellowknife RCMP cells and Yellowknife courthouse cells by the Corrections Service at 2,786 times and the RCMP at 455 times, roughly 86% and 14%. Transfers by the RCMP can occur depending on the risk of the accused and if the transfers occur outside the times provided for in the agreement between Corrections Services and the RCMP. It is anticipated that some transfers will be performed by the RCMP following the aforementioned changes, although the demand is expected to be considerably reduced.

Thank you.



Louis Sebert
Minister of Justice

c Mr. Tim Mercer
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

Mr. David Hastings
Legislative Coordinator

Mr. Martin Goldney
Deputy Minister, Justice