

**THE HONOURABLE LOUIS SEBERT  
MINISTER OF JUSTICE**

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**RCMP in the Northwest Territories**

Mr. Speaker, few services have as direct an impact on our citizens as the policing services provided by the RCMP. This modern relationship continues to develop, providing effective and collaborative policing services in our communities.

Over the past few years, the RCMP in the NWT have placed a deliberate focus on increasing public trust in policing services, working with partners to improve responses for vulnerable populations, and adapting their work to reflect changing legislation and best practices.

This includes providing policing services that reflect community priorities and an understanding of the unique cultural history of the communities the RCMP serves. The Commanding Officer of “G” Division has stressed the importance of regionally-specific outreach activities by members of “G” division. This includes attending feasts and meeting with elders, and that these activities need to be part of members’ initial introduction to the community, as well as part of ongoing community engagement, and be consistently applied across the NWT.

Through Policing Priority Action Plans, the RCMP and community leadership work jointly to develop plans for addressing the specific needs of each community. All 33 communities in the NWT have these plans in place. This work is vital to building a relationship of trust between RCMP members and the communities they serve. Additionally, analysis of the community priority plans allows the opportunity to examine current community safety pressures and plan for future demands. A vital part of this collaborative approach is accountability. Action Plan reporting tracks the RCMP and community goals and are reported on quarterly. These reports are provided to community leadership to be shared with community members. The action plans are revisited annually and revised as necessary by the community and the RCMP. Through this process, communities have a direct role in making their community safer.

Almost every community has identified stopping drugs and bootlegging activities as a priority. The mutual trust gained from building Community Action Plans has resulted in the support the police need in order to see results in these areas.

I would also like to update Members on the status of our work over the last decade on the First Nations Policing Program. Currently, we are expecting an expansion under this program to the Territories that will support the priorities of this Legislative Assembly to ensure services are delivered locally with culturally appropriate methods that will support the priorities of communities in the NWT. Before the end of the 2021 fiscal year, we will be seeing additional policing resources to support those detachments that currently serve small communities under the First Nations Policing Program allowing us to better address the challenges of policing in the North.

Mr. Speaker, members from the RCMP “G” Division, in partnership with staff from the departments of Education, Culture and Employment and Justice, were instrumental in creating the RCMP history project on Special Constables in the NWT, the “We Took Care of Them” exhibit. The exhibit celebrates and honours the contributions of Indigenous people in the NWT to policing in the North. This past April, “We Took Care of Them” received national recognition as the winner of the Canadian Museums Association Award of Outstanding Achievement in the Exhibition – Cultural Heritage category. I would like to congratulate the entire team who worked on this project. I can advise Members that this awarding winning project has been very successfully received in our communities. All seven educational kits have been distributed and are being utilized by members in the regions during community or school events. In each case, surviving family members or relatives of Special Constables are invited to attend and join in these presentations, and are encouraged to speak their language.

In addition, one kit has been requested to be on loan to the RCMP Depot in Regina for use with their recruits during their training to advance cultural awareness. We hope that it will make our NWT recruits very proud as they attend depot for their training this year to see their own history being featured. All RCMP cadets receive cultural awareness training at Depot, woven in with concepts of human rights, harassment, discrimination, ethics, and bias-free policing. Cultural awareness training comprises 66 hours in the Depot training curriculum. Of that, 17 hours is dedicated to Indigenous cultural awareness training. In addition, recruits coming to our local “G” Division have mandatory requirements for an additional six hours of Indigenous Awareness training.

I am very pleased to announce that as of December 2018, three NWT recruits have graduated and have returned to the NWT for their placement. There are still two NWT residents in Depot actively working towards completing their training. In addition, it is my understanding that since January of this year, 28 other NWT applicants are within different stages of the recruitment process with the majority being Indigenous applicants. This is a very significant number of Northern recruits.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the longer term efforts of the RCMP leadership and individual members have made great inroads in regard to community trust and respect. The ultimate goal we are all working towards is safe communities where our citizens can thrive. I applaud the work that the RCMP have been doing to help achieve this goal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.