

Oyate Safe House: Minister's Answers and Comments Fly In Face of Auditor's Report

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| <p>Sask. Party Written Question: Did the Department of Community Resources monitor how the money provided to the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council was being spent? If so, what steps were taken to ensure financial oversight of the Oyate Safe House? (All written questions asked March 14, 2006)</p> | <p>Minister's Response to Written Question: Yes. Quarterly reports and the annual financial statements.</p> | <p>Provincial Auditor's Report: "DCR did not regularly inspect or evaluate Oyate's programs ... In addition, DCR did not know if Oyate safeguarded the money it received from DCR and used it only for the purposes DCR intended." - Page 22 "Oyate has not given any annual audited financial statements ... without information on the financial position of Oyate ...or information on its cash flows ... DCR is not able to tell if Oyate is in a sustainable position to continue to deliver services." - Page 23</p> |
| <p>Sask. Party Written Question: What accountability measures were put in place when the Department of Community Resources first provided money to the File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council for the Oyate Safe House?</p> | <p>Minister's Response to Written Question: A service agreement was signed.</p> | <p>Auditor's Report: "DCR did not regularly inspect or evaluate Oyate's programs. In addition, DCR did not attend the board of directors' meetings ... Without adequate processes to keep informed of all significant problems at Oyate, DCR did not know if Oyate was meeting DCR's objectives. In addition, DCR did not know if Oyate safeguarded the money it received from DCR and used it only for the purposes DCR intended." - page 22</p> |
| <p>Sask. Party Written Question: Per the recommendation of the Legislative Committee on the Prevention of the Exploitation of Children through the Sex Trade, did the department ensure the Oyate Safe House could adequately protect children in its care prior to providing the organization with funding? If so, what steps were taken?</p> | <p>Minister's Response to Written Question: Yes. Ongoing training and support from the department.</p> | <p>Auditor's Report: "DCR did not follow all of its established processes to select Oyate to operate a safe house for children. For example, it selected Oyate to deliver the services even though Oyate had no experience in the residential care of children." - Page 2</p> |

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| <p>Sask. Party Written Question: Has the Department received any letters, or written or verbal reports from individuals or organizations concerned about the welfare of children at the Oyate Safe House? If so, when were these letters or reports received by the department?</p> | <p>Minister's Response to Written Question: Yes. All matters were referred to the Board of Directors</p> | <p>Minister's Comment: "We have no evidence there has been any problems, we have no evidence they did not respond to the issues." - Regina Leader Post, March 15/06</p> <p>Auditor's Report: "DCR gave us numerous examples of 'issue papers' that described problems it was aware of at Oyate since November 2003 ... DCR was unable to show us who at DCR received these papers, what corrective actions were proposed, and what, if any remedies DCR took when Oyate did not correct the problems." - Page 25</p> |
| <p>Sask. Party Written Question: How has the department monitored the success of programs being delivered through the Oyate Safe House?</p> | <p>Minister's Response to Written Question: Communications through program staff and case workers.</p> | <p>Auditor's Report: "We found that DCR did not use adequate practices to supervise Oyate's activities ... Once the Oyate safe house opened, DCR did not do a risk assessment of Oyate to determine how closely it needed to supervise Oyate ... DCR did not closely supervise Oyate or take adequate corrective action when it became aware of the allegations." - Page 2</p> |

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| <p>Sask. Party Written Question: <i>Is the Department of Community Resources aware of any children who resided at the Oyate Safe House have returned to work in the sex trade?</i></p> | <p>Minister's Response to Written Question: The department cannot report with certainty. This is not a secure custody facility.</p> | <p>Auditor's Report: <i>"We expected DCR to request performance reports that included key information on recommendations of the Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade ... We did not see evidence that DCR asked for any information of this type. Oyate could not show us evidence that it collected information on its success rates, i.e. number of children returned to a safe and healthy environment." - Page 24</i></p> |
| | <p>Minister's Comment: "We have no concerns as to glaring problems in relation to money management."- Regina Leader Post, March 2/06</p> | <p>Auditor's Report: <i>"DCR did not regularly inspect or evaluate Oyate's programs. In addition, DCR did not attend the board of directors' meetings ... Without adequate processes to keep informed of all significant problems at Oyate, DCR did not know if Oyate was meeting DCR's objectives. In addition, DCR did not know if Oyate safeguarded the money it received from DCR and used it only for the purposes DCR intended." - page 22</i></p> |
| | <p>Minister's Comment: "We have no evidence there has been any problems, we have no evidence they did not respond to the issues." Regina Leader Post, March 15/06</p> | <p>Auditor's Report: <i>"During 2003 to 2005, DCR received allegations of inappropriate care of the children, a sexual assault on a child, unfair labour practices, and misuses of public money." "DCR did not always take appropriate action to remedy those concerns...DCR was unable to show us who at DCR received these papers, what corrective actions were proposed, and what, if any, remedies DCR took when Oyate did not correct the problems" - Pgs. 6 and 25</i></p> |

“The pilot project [the safe house] should not open until the necessary follow-up services referred to in this report are in place, especially follow-up case workers, access to addiction treatment services and positive opportunities to earn income. Without the appropriate follow-up services, a protective secure care pilot project will not achieve the successes that are hoped for”- **Recommendation #33, The Special Committee to Prevent the Abuse and Exploitation of Children Through the Sex Trade**

Auditor’s Report: *“We asked for DCR’s assessment of the two proposals it received. DCR was unable to provide us with adequate documentations of its assessments or the basis for awarding the contract ...” - page 20*