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Need for a Comprehensive GNWT Human Resource Strategy

MR. RAMSAY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to speak today about the future of our government's operations. I have spoken previously in this House about the GNWT's lack of a comprehensive human resource plan or strategy. I believe strongly that, as a government, we need to address the growth and direction of our public service.

For the past four years, I have witnessed a steady stream of knee-jerk reactions and ill-conceived position growth. Sure, we are expanding our workforce in the area of health care, teachers and social workers, but that does not explain the growth over a seven year period of 3761 in 1999 to over 5500 today. That, Mr. Speaker, is an increase of over 44 percent. The government has grown by close to 1800 positions in just seven years.

After division took place with Nunavut in 1999, it would have made sense at the time to come up with a human resource strategy. Instead, Mr. Speaker, we struggle year to year, budget to budget, supplementary appropriation to supplementary appropriation approving more and more positions. Mr. Speaker, I'm not opposed to supporting positions where they make sense and they're needed, but I have to be convinced that the subject department has not got the capacity to get the work done.

Not only have we seen growth to over 5500 employees, we also have an acute addiction to consultants, contractors and services which, Mr. Speaker, often times are rendered by former employees of this government. With the completion of land claims and the move towards self-government and implementation of those claims, we should be looking, as a government, at areas of our operations which we could devolve into the regions where claims are settled.

To date and to my knowledge, nothing, Mr. Speaker -- and I mean nothing -- has happened to address this issue. Why can't the government get a focus over a vision on what our future human resource requirements are going to be? We spend nearly \$500 million annually on it. It should be a top priority of any government.

Judging by the answers I've received to date, I'm not the least bit convinced that this government actually cares about this situation, Mr. Speaker, and I'd like to ask some questions of the Minister responsible for Human Resources, at the appropriate time. Mahsi. --- Applause