

16th Legislative Assembly

Second Session

First Sitting

February 6 – 21, 2008

FEB 19, 2008

Concerns Regarding the Department of Human Resources

Mr. Ramsay: Mr. Speaker, three years ago the 15th Legislative Assembly consolidated Human Resources into a centralized delivery model. As Members know, there were, and still are, a great deal of growing pains as the government shifts its Human Resources processes to this model.

Former employees, when trying to retire, were waiting months and sometimes more than a year to receive their documentation from HR. There were, and continue to be, problems with PeopleSoft, and a well-known breach happened last year. As well, there is an inherited backlog that still exists in the department today.

The department spent over \$500,000 on the Hackett Report, which was to address business processes inside the department. Here we are, almost two years later, and I'm still left wondering what difference that report has made. I'm still receiving calls from individuals who feel this department is not functioning the way it should.

I have spoken to a wide array of individuals, from clerks to senior staff, and they all seem to be saying the same thing — that the department is being run with a management style of fear and intimidation. I've become aware that staff must give their computer passwords to management, and over the weekend, their offices are searched for files. The searchers catalogue which files are in which offices, and on Monday the employees are questioned about what files they have in their offices.

To me, this seems to be a very excessive and heavy-handed approach. Staff should not live in constant fear of losing their jobs. This is our Human Resources department, the department which should be setting the standard for how to treat employees and should not be a dictatorship where staff are always fearing reprisal for speaking out.

Mr. Speaker, many outstanding employees have left Human Resources over the past 18 months because of the management style that exists there. The last Premier and Minister of Human Resources did not seem to want to address the issues that the staff were raising within the Department of Human Resources.

Now we have a new Premier, a new Minister, but the same issues are still there. What will it take for someone over there to do something? We can't continue to ignore what is happening. The staff that are there need and deserve our help. It would seem absurd to ask Human Resources to conduct a human resources review of its own department, but that is the reality, and that's what I'll be asking for today.