

**16<sup>th</sup> Legislative Assembly**

**Second Session**

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**Concerns Regarding the Department of Human Resources**

**Mr. Ramsay:** Yesterday in response to a question I had asked on the realities of working at the Department of Human Resources, the Minister said they had reduced the backlog of final pays by 50 per cent. To my knowledge, the backlog has been there since the department was first formed two years ago. So 50 per cent, Mr. Speaker, is nothing to be proud of.

What about grievances? How is the department dealing with grievances? I'm aware of some that are at least two and a half years outstanding. Is this an acceptable standard? Has the Minister talked to any of the front-line staff at Human Resources?

I remember a former Minister of Justice who stood in this House, day in and day out, saying nothing was wrong at North Slave Correction Centre. He listened solely to his senior managers and DM. He did not listen to me or the front-line workers, who were insisting that all was not right at North Slave Correctional Centre. Finally he agreed to an HR review at the facility, and there were many deficiencies that had to be addressed.

The moral of the story, Mr. Speaker, is that — to the Ministers — you cannot just listen to your DM or your senior managers. You have to listen to your front-line workers, those in the trenches every day, and the MLAs who are across from you, bringing their issues up in this House. That's where you'll find out what's really going on.

Human Resources also has to do a better job when it comes to staffing vacant positions and communicating the process. Mr. Speaker, I believe we need to look at a system like they use in Alberta, where there is the ability to check competition status online. It shows the posted closing dates and also if the position is in the screening, interview or offer stage. At least this way, it gives applicants some kind of idea where things are at. They're not waiting five and six months to see where their job status is at.

Here in the Legislative Assembly we throw the word “accountability” around quite often, but rarely do we put it into place to ensure it happens. Mr. Speaker, I think a system like they use in Alberta, here in the Northwest Territories, would give HR some much-needed accountability.