

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

**Second Session**

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**Aboriginal Employment in GNWT Senior Management Positions**

**Mr. Ramsay:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today I'd like to discuss affirmative action and the involvement of aboriginal persons in senior management. The Affirmative Action Policy has been around for nearly 20 years, since 1989, and it has certainly had an impact on the GNWT's hiring decisions over that period of time.

What I want to point out today is that even though the policy has been with us for nearly 20 years, we're still failing as a government to have a workforce representative of the population. The percentage of aboriginal employees has been hovering in and around the 30 per cent mark over the past dozen years. There does not seem to be a concerted effort on behalf of government to improve on the statistics.

Even more troubling, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that even though the policy itself has been with us for almost 20 years, we have not been successful at succession planning for aboriginal employees. Currently we have just 15 per cent of the GNWT's senior management listed as aboriginal. Even after having affirmative action for 20 years, we are not doing well in this area.

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations has only one employee that is aboriginal in senior management. ITI, arguably the most top-heavy department in government today, has 21 senior management positions of which only one is staffed by an aboriginal person. Some of the other areas of our operations also need to do a better job acquiring aboriginal senior managers. These include Justice, Aurora College, Finance and the Department of Executive. I also point out that the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has the best percentage government-wide, with six out of 15 senior managers being aboriginal for a percentage of 40 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, what the GNWT needs to do is have a plan, and it needs to be able to identify aboriginal employees for mentoring and succession planning. What is happening is that aboriginal employees are getting frustrated and taking their skills with them outside the Northwest Territories, and this is a shame. We need to keep our people and their skills here in the NWT. We need to find out why there is always a huge discrepancy between the percentage of aboriginal employees in government and those in management. Mr. Speaker, I'll have questions for the Minister of Human Resources at the appropriate time. Mahsi.