

President's Perspective on the Lack of Succession Planning within the Provincial Government

The results of the 2006 census are now becoming available and it comes as no surprise that the population is aging. With an aging population comes an aging workforce and a new set of issues and concerns. UPSE members are already voicing their concerns over the apparent lack of succession planning in Provincial Public Service. Public Service employees work hard to provide Islanders with the quality programs and services; they are all too familiar with trying to do more with less. The lack of succession planning of the aged workforce, coupled with the increasing demands on the system, has raised concerns about the future of public service delivery.

The Government provides many services to our senior population. What happens when this group grows in numbers and the available workforce decreases because they now are requiring the very service which they provided? Is there a plan in place to utilize the skills and abilities of the current workforce to train and mentor our youth? Will the Government be willing to offer incentives for workers to prolong retirement? Are there plans in place to increase the efforts for recruitment and retention for job classifications that are already proving hard to fill? All of these concerns need to be addressed and immediate action is required.

In the Civil Service 54.3 percent of the permanent staff are between the ages of 45-59 years old. The group of workers who are 29 years of age and younger make up only 4.2 percent of the permanent Civil Service workforce. In the year 2011 we will see the first of the baby boomers reach the ripe age of retirement. The Provincial Government may have to look at increasing the number of current entry-level positions so that they can allow a mentoring process to occur.

Government is accountable to the taxpayers of this province and has a responsibility to ensure that the social programs and other government services on Prince Edward Island remain accessible to all Islanders. The implementation of a plan to ensure the long term sustainability of these services should be a priority of the Liberal government. To date there is no evidence that such a plan is in place. The demographics of our population will change rapidly in the very near future. These changes will place new burdens and expectations on the existing programs and services. This Government needs to show Islanders that it is prepared for the challenges ahead. The year 2011 is approaching quickly and it is only the beginning!!

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