



Bureaucrats say no more jobs to leave Fort Smith

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by Don Jaque

No further exodus of government jobs is planned from Fort Smith, says Gary Black, associate deputy minister of the executive.

Black, who was assigned to plan the devolution of the Fort Smith regional offices in 1986, says the changes in 1986-87 that shifted many positions to Fort Simpson are finished.

"I don't know of any more (person years) being looked at being shuffled out of Fort Smith."

He said his report that followed the ~~Carter~~ Report on how to best devolve the regional office, was never really written and doesn't exist today.

"The moves came from a scaled down version of the report," he said. "It was subsequently changed and basically ignored."

He said any further moves of positions that might happen would be initiatives of the individual departments.

"That doesn't mean it (more moves) won't happen. It's up to the individual ministers."

He said the deputy and assistant deputy ministers of the departments would be the ones who would plan any such moves.

Jeannie Marie Jewell, as a cabinet minister, would likely know as much information on any planned moves, as anybody, he said.

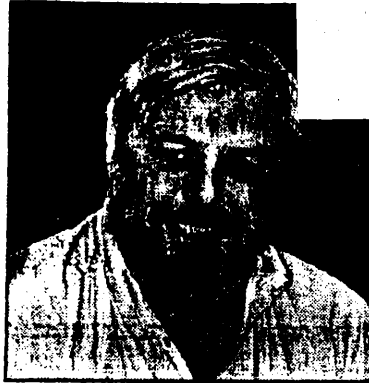
The Department of Renewable Resources in Fort Smith has been the focus of some rumors on possible future moves. Some employees there are afraid to buy houses in Fort Smith because of the atmosphere of insecurity.

But no moves of personnel are planned, said Bob Wooley, assistant deputy minister in charge of operations for that department.

Wooley said authority is being devolved from regional offices to the districts on a day-to-day basis, but that will not mean relocating positions.

"We have no intention of moving these guys. We don't intend to make a move. Not in the near future."

He said rumors may stem from the Black Report, left over from the moves of last year.



Gary Black

Some of the positions in Fort Smith are headquarters positions, like those involved with the bison study program. People may feel these are more liable to move because of their status, he said, but these fears are groundless.

"In fact the forest fire control center is an entire headquarters division. Its not going to be moving anywhere."

"All positions we have here right now will be staying here," says Don Boxer, the regional superintendent of Renewable Resources. He looks after the Fort Simpson, Yellowknife and Fort Smith districts.

He admits that there are feelings of insecurity in all government offices.

"The feelings of people, not only in my department, but in all departments too, is that the final word (on transfers) hasn't come down.

"Its up to the individual if they feel secure or not secure."

Black sits on the transfer policy steering committee, which he says is a "committee for bureaucrats" whose mandate is to deal with personnel moves, making sure they are organized and effective. He said he would likely hear of any moves if there were any planned.

He said it is certain nothing will happen before the next meeting of the legislative assembly (in February). A major planning session of the cabinet is scheduled to be held after that. There they will "flesh out the directions and priorities they have already established," he said.

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