

# Opposition shocked at Wiseman testimony

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The provincial Opposition is shocked that Health Minister Ross Wiseman did not read his briefing notes on cancer-testing problems until months after he took over the portfolio.

Wiseman was appointed health minister in January 2007.

Prior to that, he served three years as parliamentary secretary for the department.

But Wiseman told the Cameron Inquiry Thursday that he didn't read all of his briefing book, and didn't delve into the cancer-testing issue until May 2007.

That's when a CBC report, citing court documents, revealed that the testing problem was much more serious than officials had previously let on.

NDP Leader Lorraine Michael was perplexed at why Wiseman did not read parts of his briefing papers.

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## Minister fell down on job: Jones

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"I find that very shocking to hear," Michael told reporters at the legislature Thursday.

"To me, it is a major responsibility of ministers to read briefing notes — especially if it's on a topic that is of public concern."

Premier Danny Williams — who was out of the province Thursday to co-chair the Public Policy Forum testimonial dinner in Toronto — has insisted this week that he must rely on his ministers to handle their portfolios.

"Despite the opinion by some people that this might be a one-man show — which has been termed — in fact, these ministers are managers of their department and they are delegated with the authority to run their own departments," Williams told the legislature Monday.

Asked how this testimony reflects on the premier's comments, Michael replied: "He is now going to have to look at who he is depending on, because if they aren't doing their job — and I think not reading your briefing notes is a serious infraction with regard to doing your job — then the premier now has responsibility to actually look into how his ministers



Yvonne Jones  
LIBERAL LEADER

are running their departments."

Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones, who served in cabinet during the Grimes administration, said ministers are expected to read all cabinet papers and briefing notes.

She doesn't think that expectation would have changed since.

"If he's the minister, and the briefing notes pertain to his department, there's an expectation that he reads them," Jones said. "If he didn't, he fell down on the job as minister, in my opinion."

The House is scheduled to resume sitting on Monday.

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