

# Tories aren't as open as they claim, Liberals say

*Opposition says it's still waiting for dozens of documents*

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 THE TELEGRAM

The House of Assembly is closed for the summer, but the openness claimed by the Williams government is being questioned by the provincial Liberals.

The Opposition says it's still waiting for a variety of information promised to them by ministers during the last sitting of the House.

According to a stack of paper the Liberals provided to The Telegram, 30 documents, reports, letters and other pieces of information are still outstanding.

The Liberals say in other cases ministers said they would look into

an issue and report back to the House.

"Government always routs about openness and accountability, but we've shown example after example of where that is not the case and this is just another one," says Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones.

Jones says between 35 and 40 documents haven't materialized and that doesn't include dozens of other documents asked for during estimate committee meetings.

But government House leader and Minister of Education, Joan Burke, says the government isn't being coy or intentionally withholding information.

"I disagree with the accusation

from the Opposition because I think that, you know, we certainly strive to be as co-operative as we possibly can in question period and provide answers to the questions that are being asked," says Burke.

"Sometimes it depends on the information that's asked for. Sometimes it's not readily available and more times it is," she says.

"If we say in the House that we are going to provide information then that's something we strive to do."

And Burke says sometimes it takes time to gather complete information.

Jones says she has no problem waiting for days or even a few weeks.

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Yvonne Jones  
LIBERAL LEADER

## Information often incomplete: Jones

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"But I don't think that, you know, we should find ourselves in a situation like we are now where the House of Assembly is closed down, people are gone off for the summer and we're looking for 30 or 35 pieces of information that we didn't get," Jones says.

"This is a government who, even when they do table information upon request, that information is often incomplete," says Jones.

As an example, the Liberals asked for teacher allocation numbers for each of the 283 schools in the province.

Instead, Jones says, they got a breakdown of the total number of teachers for the four school boards for the past and the coming year.

"Which really doesn't tell me anything," says Jones.

"Because the point that we were trying to argue had to do with the fact that rural schools were seeing teaching units transferred out and those units were being put in larger schools."

Burke says while the bulk of the work has been done on allocations, it's still not completed.

"The final allocations will actually be determined in September," she says.

The reason Burke gives is things

### BY THE NUMBERS

The Liberals say they are still waiting for 30 pieces of information. The Numbers by Department.

- > Education — 7
- > Health and Community Services — 6
- > Natural Resources — 4
- > Transportation and Works — 3
- > Premier's Office — 2
- > Municipal Affairs — 2
- > Government Services — 2
- > Environment and conservation — 1
- > Justice — 1
- > Aboriginal Affairs — 1
- > Finance — 1

Source: Liberal Party of Newfoundland and Labrador

may change regarding the number of students at each school and how many schools may need extra teachers because of special needs students.

But Jones says the Department of Education must have a working document and that's what should have been tabled.

Jones says the Liberals will continue to follow up on these requests for information over the summer months.