

Jones questions Dunderdale on Wabush Mines layoffs

By **DAVE BARTLETT**

THE TELEGRAM

A day after the operators of Wabush Mines announced about 160 layoffs, Liberal Leader Yvonne Jones wanted to know what the province plans to do to help those who will lose their jobs in February.

Jones put that question to Natural Resources Minister Kathy Dunderdale in the House of Assembly Wednesday.

Dunderdale said she was monitoring the situation and will meet with the mine management in the next two weeks.

"I'm encouraged at this point in time that they are looking at early retirement and trying to find other measures to lessen the impact on the workers," she said.

She also said Wabush Mines will also continue a pilot project to develop manganese, a by-product of the ore it produces.

That answer was not good enough for Jones.

"I'm not sure just monitoring it and waiting in your office for the phone to ring to tell you the next amount of layoffs at the next mine or the next oil refinery is the (best)

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**Natural Resources Minister
Kathy Dunderdale**

approach to that," she said.

"At no time do I sit in my office waiting to react to bad news. We are fully engaged and fully aware," retorted Dunderdale.

Dunderdale said she was in daily contact with the mine and other companies such as the Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC) and Harvest Energy which runs the Come By Chance oil refinery as the economy continues to struggle.

Wabush Mines plans to cut production nearly in half next year.

The company also announced Tuesday it will eliminate 120 other jobs at a pelletizing plant on the Quebec side of the border.