

Order Paper Questions

LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR WIVES OF SENIOR OFFICIALS

Question No. 1,446—Mr. Cossitt:

1. With reference to the answer to Question No. 24 which, among other persons, listed Barbara Head, wife of an employee of the Privy Council Office, as one of those taking French language courses at government expense while not herself a member of the Public Service, is this individual the wife of Mr. Ivan Head, who is a member of the Prime Minister's staff?

2. What is the exact annual salary in dollars paid to Mr. Head?

3. For what reason did the government at taxpayer's expense pay for Mrs. Head's French language courses (a) was one of the reasons because the government believed that Mr. Head's salary was not sufficient for him to pay this expense himself (b) over how long a period of time did Mrs. Head take French language courses at taxpayer's expense and what was the total annual salary of Mr. Head during that period of time?

Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Secretary of State): I am informed by the Public Service Commission as follows: A number of questions have been posed on language training programmes for spouses of members of parliament and senior Public Service personnel. It seems, from the points raised in each case and from previous inquiries, that some cost-related aspects of these programmes have been emphasized at the expense of other fundamental issues. It appears preferable, at this point, to provide a more comprehensive reply to questions raised in the House through clarification of these important issues. The provision of language training of spouses of Members of Parliament and senior public servants who are not themselves employed in the Public Service is founded both on legislation and on principle. Firstly, the Official Languages Act and the Parliamentary Resolution on Official Languages in the Public Service are juridical instruments which recognize and ensure the equality of status, rights and privilege of French and English in all areas of federal government action and the rights of Canadian citizens to deal with and receive services from the federal government in the language of their choice. Consequently, the government, with the support of all parties, has over a period of years, encouraged steps to enhance the bilingual character of the National Capital Region and of the Public Service at large. Secondly, the government recognizes that, as is the case in dealing with the implementation of any government policy, some costs are involved in implementing the provisions of language legislation and it is prepared to assume these costs. The government also recognizes that spouses, even though they receive no remuneration for doing so, can play a major role in assisting their spouses to carry out his or her professional responsibilities. Since members of parliament and senior executives have major representational functions in which active participation of the spouses is often required and since Parliament and the Official Languages Act dictate that Canada be represented nationally and internationally as a bilingual country, it is important that both senior executives and their spouses have a command of the two official languages. This requirement is already recognized and approved in the case of spouses of Trade Commissioners and Foreign Service Officers, whose knowledge of both official languages of Canada has proven indispensable in assisting their spouses to carry out representational or promotional duties. The same holds true for the spouses of members of parliament, affiliated to all political parties, who have participated or are presently enrolled in the

[Mr. Richardson.]

language training programmes provided through the Alliance française. Furthermore, implementation of the government's policy on official languages has become increasingly important within the Public Service. Most senior executives are involved with some aspect of implementation. Assimilation of the nature of the tradition, aspirations, socio-economic factors of the other culture which is one implication of language training programmes could ensure increased effectiveness and capacity in carrying out this task. Since senior executives must deal with other government priority programmes, the knowledge and experience that their spouses may have gained from their own participation in these programmes can be of considerable practical value to them. Finally, to senior public servants already carrying heavy responsibilities, the burden of learning French or English can indeed be heavy. And while some doubt has been expressed previously as to the validity of the need for a spouse's psychological support in such instances, it remains a realistic argument that such a support is most desirable. It appears reasonable, having seriously considered the different issues involved as well as parliament's expectations in the area of official languages that spouses of members of parliament and senior executives should have and continue to have some assistance in meeting these expectations.

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Question No. 1,448—Mr. Cossitt:

1. With reference to the answer to Question No. 24 which, among other persons, listed M. Hofley, wife of an employee of the Department of the Solicitor General, as one of those taking French language courses at government expense while not herself a member of the Public Service, is this individual the wife of Mr. B. C. Hofley, Assistant Deputy Minister in the Department of the Solicitor General?

2. What is the exact annual salary in dollars paid to Mr. Hofley?

3. For what reason did the government at taxpayer's expense pay for Mrs. Hofley's French language courses (a) was one of the reasons because the government believed that Mr. Hofley's salary was not sufficient for him to pay this expense himself (b) over how long a period of time did Mrs. Hofley take French language courses at taxpayer's expense and what was the total annual salary of Mr. Hofley during that period of time?

Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Secretary of State): I am informed by the Public Service Commission as follows: See reply to Question No. 1,446.

LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR WIVES OF SENIOR OFFICIALS

Question No. 1,450—Mr. Cossitt:

1. With reference to the answer to Question No. 24 which, among other persons, listed Diana Ainslie, wife of an employee of the Department of Justice, as one of those taking French language courses at government expense while not herself a member of the Public Service, is this individual the wife of Mr. G. W. Ainslie, Assistant Deputy Attorney General in the Department of Justice?

2. What is the exact annual salary in dollars paid to Mr. Ainslie?

3. For what reason did the government at taxpayer's expense pay for Mrs. Ainslie's French language courses (a) was one of the reasons because the government believed that Mr. Ainslie's salary was not sufficient for him to pay this expense himself (b) over how long a period of time did Mrs. Ainslie take French language courses at taxpayer's expense and what was the total annual salary of Mr. Ainslie during that period of time?