

*Supply*

As hon. members will appreciate, there is a certain amount of overlap in the area of human resource management, in particular between the D'Avignon report and the Lambert commission report. That is the mechanism that I see at the present time.

**Mr. Gauthier:** Do I take it that the minister is telling us that apart from the D'Avignon and Lambert commission reports and the Public Service Staff Relations Act review—which is very important and which I think hon. members recognize was the object of serious study by this House and the Senate some three years ago—there are seven technical amendments concerning very important things to be done with reference to the Public Service Staff Relations Act? Am I to take it that the President of the Treasury Board is responsible for those amendments? In years past the President of the Privy Council was responsible. Do we take it that this has been changed and that Treasury Board is now responsible for reviewing its own Public Service Staff Relations Act?

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Chairman, as I believe I indicated, the chairman of the cabinet committee with which ultimate responsibility rests in this regard is the President of the Privy Council.

**Mr. Gauthier:** One last question, Mr. Chairman, which deals with the question the minister alluded to a few minutes ago, and that is the retraining facilities offered to public servants who, due to either lack of work or for other reasons, are laid off. I know the minister is aware that the manpower retraining programs which apply to the general public do not apply to public servants who are laid off. I understand the reasons for that. As an employer, government was told to do its own retraining. Sometimes, however, there is a situation where a public servant is laid off because of lack of work or for other reasons and is not eligible for the retraining programs offered by Manpower.

Could the President of the Treasury Board give an assurance that this whole problem will be cleared up soon and that public servants will be offered retraining facilities and allowed to use Manpower programs?

**The Chairman:** The hon. member's time has expired. Under the rules he may ask questions later.

**Mr. Anguish:** Mr. Chairperson, I agree with many of the things that the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier has said. We sit on the same miscellaneous estimates committee and some of the concerns he has expressed about the Public Service Commission are also my concern.

I should like to ask the President of the Treasury Board whether, in order to stop the overruns for training and development within the Public Service Commission, he would consider making departments responsible for paying for training which they indicate they require or sometimes request, so that the onus and accountability for spending for training and development are on the department and not on the Public Service Commission?

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Chairman, as I recall, that very matter is under review at the present time. I understand the validity of the point and I believe it should be followed up in order to put cost and responsibility together.

**Mr. Anguish:** At the present time the amount that is being reviewed by the miscellaneous estimates committee on overruns is almost three-quarters of a million dollars and is projected to be over \$1 million for the next two years and each year following. I think it is necessary that there be some change in the accountability for training that is offered and that it is placed on the departments. I hope the minister will see fit to do that.

I should like now to turn to the Auditor General's report, the main thrust of which I felt was in the area of government spending and ineffective management. The media, however, seemed to place the blame on the inefficiency of public employees. I should like to know the minister's impression of the Auditor General's report and what it was trying to say to Parliament.

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Chairman, as the hon. gentleman knows, I have attempted, and I think successfully, not only to think through the comments of the Auditor General but to discuss them with my colleagues on both sides of the House.

In my judgment, and I believe in the judgment of the Auditor General, the problems of inefficiency in the groups examined, which were classes 1 to 4 of the clerical and regulatory groups, are management problems. In some of my answers to questions in this House I have emphasized that it is important that we not try to make the clerical and regulatory group the scapegoat of inefficiency. As anyone knows, if that group is not performing, not doing work assigned to them, or if they are inefficient, then we believe that is the responsibility of management.

The question the hon. member raises must be placed in the same context as the question raised by the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier, namely that we have a management problem, a human resource management problem. That is what we are attacking through the reforms which we hope to put in place and through the implementation of the D'Avignon and Lambert reports.

**Mr. Anguish:** Would the minister agree that it is being said of the Auditor General's report that ineffective management is the problem and not, in fact, the inefficiency of public employees?

**Mr. Johnston:** As a generalization that is my impression, Mr. Chairman. The management problem is the one to which we must address ourselves. I would not suggest for a moment that one does not find inefficiency here and there among employees, as one does everywhere, probably even in this House of Commons. We are going to address ourselves to this problem in terms of management, and I am satisfied that the Auditor General will support us in that because I believe that is what he would like to see.