

*Oral Questions***TREASURY BOARD**

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, according to the estimates tabled on Tuesday, the Treasury Board secretariat will be creating 10 more management positions at a cost of \$3.5 million to the taxpayer. That is \$350,000 for each executive. The President of the Treasury Board must have some spectacular executives in mind for that kind of salary.

How can the President of the Treasury Board pad his executive suite with 10 more managers while in the same breath cut 45,000 jobs from the rest of the civil service?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to look into the specifics of the matter the hon. member mentions.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, that overall the executive ranks in the public service have been reduced over the last four years by some 26 per cent.

As the Minister of Finance announced the other day, in our budget expenditure plan over the next three years there is a reduction of some 19 per cent in government spending. As part of the reduction in staff there will be proportional representation at the different levels: executive, middle management and frontline workers. The executive level will be part and parcel of the government's overall plan of reduction.

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** I am not sure the minister heard my point, Mr. Speaker. I said that he was going to increase his own departmental executives by 10.

He said the other day: "We will continue to manage changing priorities by reallocating resources". This is not my idea of reallocating resources by adding more to his department. It seems to me that the resources will be reallocated not toward a reduction of the deficit but to his own department.

Does the President of the Treasury Board need to increase his executive staff by 15 per cent when he is reducing the total number of the federal civil service by over 20 per cent?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know from where the hon. member gets those figures. There is no increase in the staff at Treasury Board.

In fact there is a reduction as there is in all departments as part of the overall plan to get the deficit of the country down. That has been part of the government's program as announced by the Minister of Finance.

**HEALTH**

**Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. As the minister knows, as cash transfers to provinces go down the tax point shares go up.

Yesterday the Prime Minister, speaking straight from the heart, said: "When you transfer tax points you lose all leverage after that because you don't collect the money. The day that you don't have any more cash, you can't use the leverage". That suggests to me that it is straight through the heart of the health care system.

I want to ask a question of the minister whose major responsibility to the Canadian citizen is to protect the national health care system. Clearly she has not been successful. Will she do the right thing and resign?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I explained very clearly it is because we want to maintain the five conditions of the health act that we have to make sure we transfer cash. That is why we decided to have a system of block funding so that we could have some influence.

When they have tax points the provinces are not obliged to listen to us any more. I recognize that we need some leverage because if we did not have leverage some provinces would have already cut into the five conditions. We need to have the means to make sure they do not use the fact that they have only tax points to destroy medicare.

We will keep what is needed for medicare to stay as it is.

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**THE BUDGET**

**Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the President of the Treasury Board.

Monday's budget, as has been mentioned, announced a reduction of 45,000 positions within the public service over the next three years. There is much uncertainty about the impact of these reductions.

● (1500)

Could the minister indicate what measures will be offered to these employees and assure the House that every effort will be made to accommodate employees through early retirement, early departure and other programs?

**Hon. Arthur C. Eggleton (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes. We value our employees, the ones who will be leaving and the ones who will be remaining.