

Oral Questions

[Translation]

TRANSPORTATION

Mr. Guy Saint-Julien (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Transport. Yesterday, the Royal Commission on Passenger Transport in Canada issued its schedule of hearings in Canada. To our surprise and dismay, people in the Abitibi, Témiscamingue and Northern Quebec areas have once more been ignored.

Can the minister confirm in this House that the Commission will review its position and hold hearings in those remote areas for the purpose of listening to the people in the Abitibi, Témiscamingue and Northern Quebec areas on transportation matters?

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, royal commissions of inquiry operate at arm's length. The government does not give them instructions. I would suggest to the hon. member that he take this opportunity to make his views known to the commission directly.

* * *

TREASURY BOARD

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the President of the Treasury Board. A report issued this week by Statistics Canada shows that, while the government was laying off employees in important areas such as air safety, food inspection, energy conservation and environmental research, it was hiring an army of tax promoters and collectors. Why is this government downsizing important areas of the Public Service, while hiring thousands of tax collectors ready to pick the last cents from the pockets of Canadians?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, let me set the hon. member for Ottawa West straight. The statistics published by Statistics Canada include all public servants in agencies and departments throughout the government. This is also a statistical population where Statistics Canada uses spot sampling. Those statistics are quite different from those we collect on person-years, which are controlled by the government employer, namely the President of the Treasury Board. Person-years, which are under the direct control of the employer, have indeed come down, as announced by the Hon. Minister of Finance in his

Budget. And all this without affecting in any way the safety and well-being of Canadians, Mr. Speaker.

• (1500)

[English]

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, if the minister does not like Statistics Canada's figures, perhaps he would do his own accounting to the Canadian public on the cost of contracting out new hirings and old hirings.

Will the minister admit that he has been conning Canadians, that he has slashed services and turned the lives of 25,000 public servants upside down with no gain to the taxpayers?

* * *

HOUSE OF COMMONS

ROBERT VAIVE

Mr. Speaker: I wish to advise hon. members that today is the last day at the table for one of our newest Table Officers, Mr. Robert Vaive.

[Translation]

Mr. Vaive began his career in the House in 1976 as a procedural clerk and since 1987 he has been acting as Deputy Principal Clerk in the Committees Directorate and the Table Research Branch.

[English]

He was recently appointed Deputy Clerk of the Saskatchewan Legislature and will be leaving soon to take up his new duties.

I am sure the House will want to join with me in wishing you, sir, all the very best in Regina. Come back and see us whenever you can.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: While I have the attention of the House, please join me for refreshments in Room 216-N after the House rises today to celebrate the adjournment.

I wish all of you a very happy and wonderful Easter holiday.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: I have a notice of a question of privilege. I will hear the hon. member now.