

Oral Questions

● (1450)

Mr. Ouellet: I am glad the hon. member is now asking his questions, rather than following the common practice of some hon. members who do not have the courage to ask questions but, instead, use Standing Order 43 as a means of making all kinds of wrong assertions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh!

Mr. Ouellet: Allow me to tell the hon. member, because he has the courage to ask questions directly, that the last time letter carrier service was extended was by a Liberal government. Under the Conservative government, nothing significant was done in relation to increasing the service of letter carriers.

I am pleased to tell the hon. member that, now we are back with a Liberal government, we shall be looking at our commitment with regard to postal services in a number of cities where letter carrier service is already in effect, and hoping to extend those services.

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PUBLIC SERVICE

REHIRING OF LAID-OFF PERSONNEL

Hon. Walter Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Using the analogy of the Postmaster General, who now says we are under a Liberal government with its generosity toward public servants, I wonder whether the President of the Treasury Board would tell the House what is intended by him with respect to a host of professionals and other public servants who were laid off by his government in 1978, some of whom have been placed but many of whom have not been placed notwithstanding promises made by that government that they would be placed.

Hon. Donald J. Johnston (President of the Treasury Board): I would remind the hon. gentleman that no lay-off policy was introduced by the Liberal administration. He may be referring to the policy introduced by my predecessor, the hon. member for York-Peel, who had to introduce such a policy when he inferred that he would eliminate 60,000 jobs in the public service.

The hon. member knows very well that efforts to find other employment within the public service for people laid off because of the Liberal constraint program preceding May 22, 1979, have been exceedingly successful.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Surely the minister must be aware of the famous shot in the dark of the night by the Prime Minister on August 1, 1978, when lay-offs of public servants began. The Prime Minister can aim Justin's gun at me if he wants, but that is what happened to the public service. One of the things that Liberals—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Madam Speaker: Could we have the question, please?

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Madam Speaker, the minister himself, the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier, the hon. member for Ottawa West and I have called for the development of retraining programs for the public service.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Madam Speaker: Order. Would the hon. member please put his question.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): I am doing my best to put my question. If you could caution hon. members over there and ask them to do their best to stay quiet, the President of the Treasury Board knows—

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): The President of the Treasury Board knows—

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): —the hon. member for Ottawa-Vanier knows, and the hon. member for Ottawa West knows—

Madam Speaker: Order. The question period is designed to receive answers to things the hon. member does not know.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Given the promise by the President of the Treasury Board and his colleagues—

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): —when is the President of the Treasury Board going to make announcements with respect to the retraining programs for public servants which were promised during the course of the election and about which he has been strangely silent since the election?

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, I take exception to any suggestion that I have been silent. In fact, I discussed with the hon. gentleman the importance we attach to training and to retraining. We are, I hope, bringing forward some significant programs in this regard, and I hope to be able to make announcements in the House in the very near future. I shall be delighted to discuss further with the hon. gentleman some of his ideas which sometimes, I must say with respect, are quite good.

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PARKS CANADA

CANCELLATION OF MOVE FROM CORNWALL TO PETERBOROUGH—GRIEVANCES OF EMPLOYEES

Mr. Bill Domm (Peterborough): Madam Speaker, this is not entirely in keeping with the claim of members opposite to generosity in their dealings with public servants. It was