

to insist on federal service being made available in both languages in accordance with the established guidelines of this House?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I have no difficulty in asserting that those who have bilingual positions in the province of Quebec will have to comply with the legislation of Parliament and offer services in both official languages. Moreover, the problem is being discussed with the National Council, but we have made some progress on this problem. We are not in a position to come to an agreement with the union at this time and the negotiations with the union representatives are proceeding. Once we have come to an agreement, we will announce the change if necessary but I do not intend to yield to threats, be it on January 1, 2 or 3 next.

[English]

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Since the question seems to have arisen as a result of a demand for a pay differential for second language skill, which the President of the Treasury Board and, indeed, the Minister of Public Works have indicated is now before cabinet in the form of a proposal and upon which they have also said no decision has been made heretofore with respect to that problem, would the President of the Treasury Board advise the House what is the policy, if any, on the question at this moment, and is the government contemplating any change in the existing policy at this time?

[Translation]

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, I have already advised the House and the committees that, as far as I am concerned, if someone has to work in both official languages, this adds to the difficulty of the task. It can be seen very easily: when I use the other official language of the country, I must make a little more effort. We decided to consider this aspect and to add certain points in the classification of employees who must work in both languages, but this problem is not solved at this time because we are discussing with the union the mechanisms which are to be established. Once we have found mechanisms which are acceptable to the representatives of both the employees and the government, we will act but we are not in a position to announce the solution of this problem at this time.

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[English]

TRADE

INCREASE IN CURRENT ACCOUNT DEFICIT—GOVERNMENT MEASURES TO OVERCOME

Hon. George Hees (Prince Edward-Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, and I should like to welcome him back from his odyssey to France where he has been searching for orders which seem harder to find day by day. As the \$250 million increase in our international current account deficit in the third quarter was caused largely by rising imports and falling exports, has the minister any plans for correcting this very serious situation, and if so, when may we expect to hear of them?

Oral Questions

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, obviously this is a continuing campaign and program, and unlike what the hon. member seems to have suggested, I think we made a very good start on changing that situation in Europe. The 30 top businessmen who were with me rolled up orders amounting to several millions of dollars. The forecasts are for a substantial increase in trade between the two countries in the immediate future, and I hope to repeat that in other countries as well.

● (1430)

Mr. Hees: Mr. Speaker, the minister's answer sounds good but I am afraid it has a very close resemblance to the broken record of his predecessor which he played during the past three years while imports kept rising and exports kept dropping. May we expect something a little more concrete than we have been told we could expect over this period?

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GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION

SUGGESTED RE-ALLOCATION OF UNUSED FUNDS FOR LOCAL INITIATIVES PROGRAMS

Mrs. Simma Holt (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I should like my question to be answered by the President of the Treasury Board.

An hon. Member: So would we.

Mrs. Holt: In view of the restraint programs to which we as a government are committed and in view of the reported, or rumoured, plans to cut back on LIP, OFY and hopefully Canada Council and other grants, and since there are members like myself—the hon. member for Vancouver East, the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour and others—who have large sums of unused public moneys left over from our LIP allocation—

An hon. Member: Oh you have, have you?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Holt: —because we rejected phony make-work applications, would the President of the Treasury Board consider restoring these unused public funds to general revenues for all Canadians rather than them being allowed to go into a slippage fund, as was the custom in the past?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Chrétien (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for the generous offer she makes to the government, and I will discuss it with the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.