

*Oral Questions***PUBLIC SERVICE**

## OVERCLASSIFICATION IN CERTAIN SECTORS

**Mr. Harvie Andre (Calgary Centre):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. The public service classification study which was tabled yesterday indicated that as of April 1, 1976, the cost to the taxpayer of maladministration in this field was \$43.6 million per year. Using up to date numbers of civil servants and salary information, a more accurate estimate would be \$77 million a year.

What action has the minister initiated, and what action does he propose to take, to ensure that taxpayers get fair value for the millions of dollars we are spending—or wasting here—while seeing that those public servants who are the victims of this maladministration are not unduly penalized?

**Hon. Judd Buchanan (President of the Treasury Board):** To answer the first part of the question, what we are doing in this study is this: there are roughly seven groupings which were identified as experiencing a particularly severe problem in this area, and there were seven departments which were identified as having an above average rate. We are working within these groupings and departments to see what can be done to tighten up and improve the classification procedures.

In addition, we are looking closely into this question of delegation to the departments which was decided on three or four years ago to see what changes could or should be made in the procedure. I might mention, of course, that this audit was initiated within Treasury Board because we felt some concern about just how effectively these delegated powers were being used and how effectively classification was being carried out. We are inquiring into that aspect very closely to see what can be done to tighten up the procedure.

As to the second part of the question concerning the employees involved, we would expect that some of these positions would be vacant, and if that is the case we should be able to downgrade them. In other cases we will consider the possibility of moving employees to other employment within the public service which is at the proper level for their qualifications, after which we could downgrade the positions. Also, we shall check whether the classification and audit which was done is correct—there has to be some verification. All these procedures, if followed carefully, should result in a minimum number of cases having to be red-circled.

● (1432)

**Mr. Andre:** Mr. Speaker, the President of the Treasury Board and his predecessor have had the study on national capital area classifications on their desks since April, 1976. I have a copy here. Compiled studies on the national capital area and non-national capital areas have been on their desks for several weeks or months.

On November 22, the minister's predecessor promised in this House during question period that there would be a detailed statement by the government regarding its actions. Will the minister make a statement in the House giving details

[Mr. Speaker.]

of what has been done, or table such details? The government has known about the problem for three years. It has had concrete information for over two years. What is being done?

Also, will the minister refer this report to the appropriate committee of the House of Commons so that we can look into the matter in some detail and be assured that the \$77 million a year which is now being wasted will not be wasted any longer than is necessary?

**Mr. Buchanan:** Mr. Speaker, I question the figure which the hon. member has used. As he has indicated, in the last couple of years he has moved the figure up from \$46.3 million—which is certainly far in excess of what we consider acceptable—to \$77 million.

As the hon. member is aware—I believe he was one of the questioners—there was considerable questioning in this regard in the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates earlier this year when the deputy secretary for personnel policy was present. There was a fair amount of probing and discussion and, I think, a fairly forthcoming response to the concerns which were raised, and I suggest that that is probably a legitimate and sensible way to continue the process.

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**POST OFFICE**

POSTAGE STAMPS BEARING PICTURE OF HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

**Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Postmaster General. I have said on a number of occasions that this government is endeavouring to downgrade the monarchy. I need only point to what the Prime Minister said. He said he had no more use for the Queen than he had for snowshoeing or skiing.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Trudeau:** Privilege, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Three o'clock.

**Mr. Trudeau:** I have never said any such thing, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** The denials come late, because he said that on a couple of occasions.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Trudeau:** When?

**Mr. Dawson:** You are getting old.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** The truth hurts. I want to ask the minister why, across this country today, in various post offices one is unable to purchase any stamp, either the 12-cent, the 14-cent or the 16-cent stamp, with the Queen's picture thereon. Why is this?