

were women in their fifties with families to support. They have little hope of finding new jobs.

Would the President of the Treasury Board tell the House what immediate plans he has to protect these women and what plans he has to avoid repetition of such discriminatory practices?

**Mr. Stevens:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member says that clearly there are no guidelines. I indicated that the guideline is no lessening of the number of women working in the public service as a result of reductions.

**An hon. Member:** That is a wish.

**Mr. Stevens:** With reference to the hon. member's specific point, I will be very pleased to look specifically into the situation to which the hon. member has referred, and I will report back to her in a private letter.

[Translation]

PROPOSED REDUCTIONS IN PERSONNEL—EFFECT ON  
FRANCOPHONES

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the President of the Treasury Board if he has established guidelines regarding the consequences of the reduction in the number of Francophones in the civil service who, according to reports we have received, will be more affected than any other group in the civil service as a result of the initiatives taken by the president.

[English]

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (President of the Treasury Board):** Mr. Speaker, may I take this opportunity to congratulate the former minister on his new critic's role in this House.

With reference to his question, he will be pleased to hear that the proportion of Francophones in the Canadian public service has actually gone up marginally on a percentage basis. We have indicated that we do not wish to see any deterioration in that ratio, that is, the number of Francophones in the public service compared with the total number in the public service.

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHETHER PROGRAM WILL BE ESTABLISHED TO  
PROVIDE JOBS TO PERSONNEL LAID OFF

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. Is the minister not aware of the serious consequences of a policy of attrition on the groups just mentioned by the member for Saint-Maurice? Francophones and women have a high employment termination rate, 27 per cent for women and 21 per cent for Francophones. Has the minister devised a development and training program for these persons who might find themselves on a very competitive labour market, who are now pursuing a career in the public service and could be laid off as a result of the arbitrary decisions he has taken and of his

attrition policies as he calls them and which are just out of this world?

● (1140)

[English]

**Hon. Sinclair Stevens (President of the Treasury Board):** Again, may I congratulate the hon. member on his role as Treasury Board public service critic. I must say, however, that although he has been a critic for several months he has obviously not understood our attrition program.

The anxieties to which he refers are, in fact, unreal. Over the coming period we anticipate that for every three persons leaving the public service two will be hired, and I believe the hon. member will find that the problems to which he refers will not materialize.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier):** The minister did not answer the question. I would like to know if there will be a program for the development and improvement of public servants? There should be a full development program that would allow public servants either to embrace a new career or to get a new job within the public service. That is the question. Is there a global program for the development and the improvement of the staff?

**Some hon. Members:** There is nothing.

[English]

**Mr. Stevens:** In his supplementary question I suppose the hon. member has underlined the fact that he did not read the material we put out. We have indicated that we do facilitate the re-employment of any person who may have to leave the public service as a result of program changes or that type of thing.

There is no doubt that the kind of circumstances to which the hon. member refers have been anticipated and we intend to ensure that those who are presently public servants will not be laid off simply as a result of any reduction or attrition in the public service.

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[Translation]

PENSIONS

INQUIRY WHETHER LEGISLATION WILL BE AMENDED

**Mr. Gaston Isabelle (Hull):** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the President of the Treasury Board. Knowing the great sympathy of the minister for public service employees and also the uncertainty that is created by some of his initiatives, would he tell the House if it is his intention to amend the Pension Act in order to assure retired public servants that their pensions will be geared to the cost of living?