

Training of Public Servants

ago about this situation. I was therefore very satisfied with the recent announcement by Treasury Board.

I warmly welcome both the latest initiative of Treasury Board and the announcement, by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) of a new staff training policy, in June of 1980, two months after this motion was tabled in the House.

The new staff training policy recognizes, as I have emphasized on numerous occasions in this House, that human resources are as critical as financial and capital resources, and that training is both "an essential component of human resources planning and an accepted cost of doing business". The major thrust of the new policy, however, is to link employee training to specific operational requirements identified by management in individual departments and agencies. The new policy requires managers to identify and decide on professional and technical training needs and makes it the responsibility of the employee to develop himself or herself for future career opportunities.

A distinction is therefore made in the new staff training policy between training and development. The new policy assigns responsibility for training primarily to managers and their departments, and responsibility for development to employees themselves. The new policy states:

—employees are responsible . . . for preparing for future career opportunities and for acquiring on their own time, and at their own expense, any additional training and/or education required to meet their personal development goals.

Though I welcome the new staff training policy, particularly the recognition it accords to the fact that human resources are as critical as financial and capital resources to the efficient and effective functioning of the federal administration, the new policy raises two major issues.

First, the new policy washes its hands of any involvement with employee development—employees are left to develop themselves on their own time, at their own expense, and without any form of policy or guidance to steer them. Second, how well does a policy which divorces training from development address the major issues raised by the D'Avignon committee, the Lambert Commission, the Professional Institute of the Public Service, the Public Service Alliance, civil servants themselves, and concerned members of this House?

The Public Service Alliance has expressed concern that the new staff training policy does little to guarantee the future availability of training and development courses to support staff. Since the new training policy has been put into effect, entire listings of service-wide courses offered by the Public Service Commission are no longer scheduled for delivery. The courses affected are developmental in character and their suspension affects the learning opportunities of support staff generally, and of women civil servants in particular.

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The Public Service Alliance has also expressed the view that training budgets are the first to be slashed in times of restraint, a practice warned against by the D'Avignon committee, and that training opportunities have not always been dispensed on the basis of need and merit. These are points we

have raised many times in the House, and which I still think need to be answered. The PIPS group has expressed considerable concern over the lack of recycling facilities for those public servants who find themselves declared "surplus". While the Treasury Board has issued a directive in this regard, the feeling is still that not nearly enough is being done.

As for public servants themselves, a decisive majority of both Anglophone and Francophone public servants want more and better information on opportunities for improving their knowledge and skills according to studies previously conducted by the Treasury Board. Complaints are heard that opportunities available to middle and senior managers for both training and development are much greater than those available to other categories of employees.

It is for these reasons, Mr. Speaker, that I believe it essential that the government consider the advisability of assessing both training and development needs for public servants with a view to establishing a general policy, a well-organized and comprehensive one, which would cover not only training but development as well.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have the opportunity to speak on this matter. Unlike the previous speaker, I am not happy with the direction in which the government is going at this time. I feel the government does have a policy but, unfortunately, what that policy is, is not to assist its staff in developing the skills they need. The hon. member who spoke before me and who introduced this motion did mention some of the programs that exist. In addition, quite wisely, he raised some of the problems which exist.

Government direction, as stated in its training policy, does not really provide for an effective efficient program of staff development. It also ignores the opportunity to have an affirmative action program within the government. Although the government has sent up some trial balloons in affirmative action, if you look at the staff training policy which has been developed and some of the courses which have been cut out as a result of this staff training policy, you will see that women, the handicapped, and others who wish to rise within the public service, will find it difficult to do so.

I looked through a handout which was prepared by the Public Service Commission on October 27, 1980. The courses to be deleted by the Public Service Commission are basically deleted on the orders of the staff training council. As I look through that list of courses, I find the people who will suffer most will be those who have the greatest need for training. Some of the courses to be deleted refer to women's places in the work place, how to write your own resumé and to various training techniques and skills which you would need if you ever to develop within the public service. I was concerned when I saw that that responsibility has been taken from the Public Service Commission and given to a line department.

As the previous speaker pointed out, the D'Avignon report warned us against that. Up to the present time, there has been real neglect of training by the line departments. The staff