

Oral Questions

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Will the hon. member resume his seat. The second part of the hon. member's question is hardly in order. The hon. member cannot ask the minister to comment on statements made outside the House. The question might be asked in other terms or perhaps the hon. member might ask it in some other form as a supplementary.

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I have heard and seen the allegations made by the union, but I can assure the House and the hon. member that no members of the Department of National Defence staff are being laid off, dismissed or in any way having their jobs jeopardized as a result of contracting out any of the services that the hon. member mentioned.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): None the less, can the minister indicate whether this policy of contracting out is in fact a new policy or whether it relates to the already stated policy of the government, enunciated by the Treasury Board, to reduce the number of civilian employees within the Department of National Defence from 35,000 to 30,000?

Mr. Richardson: Mr. Speaker, there is no new policy of contracting out in the area of food services and maintenance and cleaning. There is no attempt to reduce the number of Department of National Defence personnel by contracting out. Our contracting out is relatively limited in those areas.

[Translation]

VALCARTIER—MEASURES TO AVOID LAYING OFF OF
CERTAIN EMPLOYEES

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): I wish to ask a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the hon. minister tell what has been the objective of the administrative measures used until now and assure the House that the department will review its policy in order to spare certain employees of the Valcartier base who have recently been threatened with dismissal at the end of the month?

[English]

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I think I have already given that assurance.

FUTURE INTENTION RESPECTING CONTRACTING OUT OF
CERTAIN SERVICES

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of National Defence. Because this concerns the livelihood of very many people, I wish to ask the minister a question to which I hope he can respond directly. Will the minister assure the House that the Department of National Defence has no intention of contracting out food or maintenance services beyond what has already been done?

Hon. James Richardson (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, our contracting out of food services and maintenance services is relatively limited. There are occasions when we are not able to meet our

[Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich).]

requirements internally and we do contract out. When we do, however, the positions of our employees are protected. I repeat, we do not have a policy to greatly increase the contracting out of services.

Mr. Rowland: In view of the fact the average age of the employees likely to be affected by any contracting out, however minimal, is in excess of 50 years, can the minister assure the House that, should contracting out take place, no indeterminate employees will lose their jobs because of it and they will be able to retain their jobs where they are currently employed or at a base nearby at the same salary?

Mr. Richardson: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I can give that guarantee and assurance to the employees. No regular employee can have his position jeopardized by any contracting out of services which we might undertake.

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OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

POSSIBILITY OF LEGISLATION IF MOTION ON ORDER
PAPER ADOPTED—EFFECT OF MOTION ON SUBSEQUENT
ADMINISTRATIONS AND PARLIAMENTS

Mr. Jack Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to the Prime Minister. It arises out of the motion on the order paper which deals specifically with the Official Languages Act. Does the Prime Minister envision an act or bill following this motion which will place binding authority either on the Treasury Board or the Public Service Commission?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the motion stands by itself. No legislation is contemplated at this time to follow up the implementation of it.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask a supplementary question arising out of the Prime Minister's answer. Can the Prime Minister assure the House that the nine points outlined by the President of the Treasury Board will have a lasting effect and carry on to another Treasury Board or another President of the Treasury Board in subsequent parliaments or, for that matter, in this parliament?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I fail to understand the meaning of the question.

Mr. Horner (Crowfoot): With Your Honour's indulgence, possibly I could explain it a little better. A resolution passed by this or any other body is an expression of that body's opinion, but if the Treasury Board, the government, the cabinet or this group of Members of Parliament should change, that resolution would not necessarily be binding on a subsequent body of men or women, or both. What means of conveyance of that authority does the Prime Minister have in mind for subsequent parliaments?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the authority lies in the act. It was endorsed by all parties in the House some years ago. The present resolution intends explaining how the act will be brought into application in as much detail as possible. If that resolution is adopted by the House, as I