

Adjournment Debate

fall under Treasury Board guidelines, are eligible for appointment to positions in the Crown agencies as well.

The government should consider using community colleges and other facilities at universities, wherever they are available, to augment, where necessary, the facilities that now exist within the public service.

Clearly, the first step is to announce a no lay-off policy, as we did, with the improvements that I have suggested at the beginning, for those laid off by reason of the Prime Minister's announcement on August 1, 1978. There must, of course, be consultation with the Public Service Staff Association and the National Joint Council so that Parliament knows what the government is doing with respect to those who serve the people of Canada in the public service. It should consider tabling the proposals in this House and referring them to a committee, with a limited time-frame of reference, so that they could be considered very quickly.

A beginning has been made with respect to an important aspect of leadership in employer-employee relations by the development of the retraining program. That development should continue apace and that announcement should be made.

I hope the parliamentary secretary will be able to give us some concrete information tonight, at least regarding the time when such an announcement will be made by Treasury Board. As I said, the public service is watching and waiting.

Mr. Robert Daudlin (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I should like to take this opportunity to say a few words on the subject of work force adjustment—both the placement and retraining of public servants who become surplus to government needs in their current jobs. I would emphasize current jobs, because we are concerned as a government to utilize the skills of public servants as fully as possible in the public service as a whole, not just in jobs they happen to hold at a particular moment in time.

We recognize a number of needs in regard to improving the placement and retraining of surplus employees. And that is not to say the departments and Public Service Commission have not done a commendable job in placing these employees in new jobs: they have. But we need to do better, through tighter procedures, better communication and more imagination, in the way we look at the skills these employees have. You know, people are adaptable. They may have spent many years in a certain line of work, and that could lead us to slot them into almost the same kinds of jobs, which may not be available. Such people can be useful in other work, of course, because they may have general skills applicable to a variety of job situations.

The need to recognize and take advantage of the adaptability of surplus employees is especially important in the matter of retraining. In the past we have retrained surplus employees placed in new jobs once they are actually working at them; we have not made a great deal of use of the formal, off the job retraining provisions of current work force adjustment policy. That degree of usage is understandable from the point of view

of the effective use of resources; it makes sense to place a person first in work he or she can readily do rather than divert them into courses. However, we do intend to encourage a more imaginative approach to formal retraining, especially in cases where surplus individuals have many of the qualifications for a vacant job, and formal retraining could bring their qualifications up to the required level. Longer retraining than envisaged under current policy may be required. So might a greater commitment of resources.

As I say, these are needs and principles that we have recognized as a government in examining how to reshape our policy of improving how we deal with surplus public servants. We also have in mind some specific measures to fulfil the needs and give effect to the principles. Before announcing any new measures, however, we want to consult with those who could ensure they will work—departmental officials and employee representatives, as well as officials of the Public Service Commission which has significant responsibilities in both placement and training. These consultations have begun and we are hopeful that they will enable a more definitive statement, working out ideas I have shared tonight with this House.

The hon. member is quite correct in raising this question. We are rather thankful that he has and that the opportunity has been given to us to provide these notes for record.

● (2210)

AIR TRANSPORT—STATUS OF TRANSPORT COMMISSION
DECISION ON HALIFAX-TORONTO ROUTE

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, on June 6, 1980, I questioned the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) with respect to the decision of the Canadian Transport Commission on the matter of the air routes between Halifax and Toronto and Halifax and Montreal. The decision made by the Canadian Air Transport Committee of the Canadian Transport Commission allowed CP Air to serve the Halifax to Toronto route and at the same time deprived Eastern Provincial Airways of access to the same route.

Curiously, the decision of the CTC also allowed CP Air to serve the Halifax-Montreal route one year hence. That route is now being served by both EPA and Air Canada. The minister in his response confirmed that an appeal had been taken from the decision of the CTC and that June 16, this very day, was the deadline for the submission of briefs and documents. Therefore the decision will now be made by the cabinet or the Minister of Transport either to reverse, or allow the decision of the CTC to stand.

If I were to criticize the decision of the CTC, I could not castigate them more than did the *Toronto Globe and Mail* in an editorial. This editorial, written on May 23, 1980, said that the CTC rightly decided to open the Halifax-Toronto route, but then proceeded to "botch the case." The CTC, said *The Globe and Mail*, was stubbornly committed to obstructing the development of regional enterprise when it chose CP Air over EPA. Let me quote the editorial: