

Adjournment Debate

positions in the public service in the national capital region then it is most unreliable as a basis of projection to the nation as a whole and the 75 per cent of public servant who are to be found outside Ottawa.

I know that in testimony before the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates officials of Treasury Board told us a little more about the staff who were doing this job. There are five in full-time positions engaged in job classification and the audit. There are perhaps 30 part-time employees involved—this to deal with 300,000 people in the public service. When I asked the President of Treasury Board what his intentions were, he said he would conduct more studies and I was pleased to hear him say he would enter into discussion with the staff associations before embarking on any program of red-circling.

● (2207)

I said at the beginning and I repeat, the public service of Canada will support all measures to improve efficiency. It is in their interest to see that classifications reflect internal consistency and market requirements, as much as it is in the interest of anybody in the nation. But it is in the interest of all Canadians that the morale of people who serve Canada be high, that they feel they can be proud of their jobs, proud of their responsibilities and proud of what they do, and they do not want to be subject to abuse, which in many cases is ill-founded. I am suggesting that this particular sample cannot be projected simply on a national basis. It will have to be fortified, re-examined and looked at again from many angles and with a substantially improved staff within the Treasury Board.

I noted in the questions raised by the hon. member for Hamilton West—who seems to have his own secret sources that leak information to him—that the very people who are responsible for the audit appear to be misclassified. Surely this is a matter crying for the attention of the Treasury Board and of senior public servants. Surely this kind of study has to be completed in a responsible way before there can be any public position taken with regard to overclassification of jobs and possible red-circling.

Mr. Thomas H. Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, once again the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) has brought a subject of importance to the attention of members of this House. I would like to outline a few of the articles that went into the study pertaining to the question that he has brought forward tonight.

During 1976, the personnel policy branch of Treasury Board secretariat undertook a sample classification audit of approximately 2,000 positions in the national capital area. The positions were selected using a sampling methodology covering all departments, agencies and occupational groups in the national capital area. For some very small agencies the population size resulted in no sample selection being made. Similarly, certain employee-oriented groups were also excluded.

[Mr. Francis.]

For each position selected, a written statement of duties was obtained from departments. Each employee was then interviewed and a determination made as to whether the duties actually performed corresponded to the written statement. The resultant evaluation process for each individual sample selection consisted of three aspects: first, a comparison of performed duties with the classification standard; second, a comparison of the written position description with the classification standard; and third, a comparison of the performed duties with the written position description.

The study report, dated October 1976, indicated that approximately 20 per cent of the incumbents were performing duties which were misclassified—16 per cent overclassified and 4 per cent underclassified or allocated to the wrong occupational group.

The study was experimental in respect to the sampling methodology. Each individual evaluation was completely consistent with normal classification evaluation procedures. The study was extended to the public service outside the national capital during 1977 using the same sampling methodology.

Follow-up action on the results of the audit for the national capital area has been delayed pending clarification, through the court, of the question of red-circling. When the Supreme Court denied leave to appeal in a test case in March of this year, it, in effect, confirmed the right of the employer to red-circle. As a result, the Treasury Board secretariat is in a position to proceed in this area as follows: continue the renegotiation of a memorandum of understanding respecting red-circling with the Public Service Alliance of Canada; raise the question of similar memoranda of understanding with the other unions; and proceed to discuss with departments specific cases of overclassification brought to our attention through the two audits, or through any ad hoc audits.

● (2212)

It is the government's intention to consider various options for improving the over-all administration of the classification system. Consideration is being given to such matters as early warning mechanisms which will assist in the identification of potential problems, and the development of control mechanisms to improve accountability in the administration of the classification system.

POST OFFICE—POSTAL CARRIERS—CONSIDERATION BY
GOVERNMENT OF ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

Mr. Peter Elzinga (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, on March 10 I asked the Postmaster General (Mr. Lamontagne) in the House of Commons whether there were any plans to lift the present freeze on hiring additional postal carriers. The Postmaster General replied by indicating that, in line with federal policy, expanded letter carrier service and the extension of existing service has been deferred for an indefinite period of time. Many of the rapidly growing areas of my constituency are presently without door to door mail service. Since the people in my constituency are now paying for such postal service, they are entitled to receive it.