

● (1425)

[Translation]

PUBLIC SERVICE

IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board. We know that the public Service Employment Act does not contain any provision under which Government employees can negotiate lay-offs or job security. According to Government policy, 15,000 jobs are to be eliminated within five years, 5,000 this year and 10,000 in the following four years. We know that this would have serious and devastating consequences for public employees, their careers and their families. Would the Minister tell the House whether his Government will make sure that, in the future, collective bargaining will cover this important and necessary provision so that lay-offs and job security can be negotiable?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I would like to emphasize the fact that we indicated in the May Budget that 15,000 person years would be eliminated over the next five years, including 5,000 during the next fiscal year. We have negotiated with all our unions a policy concerning employees who might be adversely affected by this program. As I indicated in my press release last Friday, most of them will be re-assigned either in their own Departments or in others. We have already reached agreement with the unions to deal with those employees who might be faced with the sad reality of being laid off during that period.

[English]

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, the facts are that there are 2,000 public servants at this time who have been declared surplus by the Government. My question is: has the Minister lost control of the situation, the unions are talking about strike action—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Just a question.

Mr. Gauthier: My question is: has the Minister lost control of the situation, unions are threatening strike action. Will the Minister not keep his word on the Government's commitment to public servants and allow negotiations to take place on security of jobs and on the question of designation. And I will say, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Hon. Robert de Cotret (President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that the Member opposite has lost control of the facts and we set them out very clearly in the Budget last May, that there would be a reduction of 2 per cent in the coming fiscal year in the number of person years in the Public Service, and 1 per cent every year thereafter for four

Oral Questions

years for a total of 15,000 person years. I have said very clearly that we expect that 3,200 people will be placed or replaced within their own Departments, 1,100 will be replaced within other Departments, and that at a maximum 700 would be possibly laid off over the coming year. Those are the facts, and remember them.

* * *

TEXTILE INDUSTRY

REQUEST FOR RENEWAL OF IMPORT QUOTAS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): I have a question for the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. According to a report that the Minister received before Christmas, Canada is in danger of losing between 50,000 and 60,000 jobs if the quotas are not renewed in the clothing and textile industry. I want to ask the Minister now is the Government prepared to announce that it will be renewing these quotas, and second, in terms of whatever new arrangement is made with the United States concerning trade, will he assure the House that we will not lose the right as a nation to apply such quotas.

Hon. James Kelleher (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I assume that the Hon. Member is referring to an article that appeared today with respect to a Quebec study.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): That was yesterday's question.

Mr. Kelleher: Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member is in fact referring to the release of a Quebec study I would advise the Hon. Member in the House that we are not aware of that report. We have not seen the report and are not in a position to comment on it until it comes into our possession.

STUDY UNDERTAKEN BY QUEBEC PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I do wish the cabinet Members would pay attention to the questions being asked. I asked the Minister responsible about a report, a copy of which I have and that he received some time ago. I would like to combine both. Since we now know from a federal Government report that 50,000 to 60,000 jobs are threatened by the absence of quotas and since we know, according to a secret study done by the Government of Quebec, about which there has been news in the last 24 hours, that 30,000 jobs in the Province of Quebec alone would be threatened by free trade, has the Minister obtained a copy of the Quebec report? Second, will he assure us that the quotas will be renewed?

● (1430)

Hon. Sinclair Stevens (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, obviously my colleague thought that the Hon. Member for Oshawa was at least current with the reports.

In answer to the Hon. Member for Oshawa, let me assure him, as I assured one of his colleagues yesterday on this subject, that we have this matter under review. We received