

*Supply*

employee reduction. We do not intend to follow a policy, as my predecessor did, by saying, for example, that we are going to eliminate 60,000 public servants over a three-year period, partly as he suggested at the time by privatization of Crown corporations and then some in the control sector and some in the non-control sector of the public service. We have no such intention. What I am content to do is to attack inefficiencies and to evaluate and evolve programs.

In the course of that, it may be that by eliminating a program we will in fact lose some employees. At the same time, as I pointed out, we are very concerned about the position of employees who find themselves in surplus and subject to lay-off. It is for that reason, among many other reasons, that we are putting, I hope, a renewed and increased emphasis on retraining so as to find other positions for those employees in the public service.

That is the basic philosophy. It is not a question of saying that we are going to eliminate 5,000 or 10,000 jobs; it is a question of saying that we are going to attack inefficiencies. Surely the hon. gentleman will appreciate that a program which is being evaluated turns out basically not to be delivering a service to the public or to whomever it is intended to deliver to in the private or the public sector, it then behoves us to eliminate that program or to replace it with a more effective one. It is not unlikely that, in the course of doing that, the person-years would be affected. That is why we have this complementary program that I mentioned earlier of improved—and substantially improved, I hope—training and retraining.

**Mr. Anguish:** Mr. Chairman, I was wondering if the minister would answer this question. How was the criteria set, or what criteria was used to eliminate the 5,840 person-years of employment?

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Chairman, again I apologize. Could I have that last sentence again? I am attempting to uncover where this \$16.7 billion deficit which the gentleman referred to in 1978-79 occurred.

**An hon. Member:** \$16.1 billion.

**The Chairman:** Order, please. The President of the Treasury Board has the floor.

● (1650)

**Mr. Anguish:** Mr. Chairperson, what criteria were used to eliminate the 5,840 person-years of employment that were cut from public employees?

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Chairman, the person-year reduction the hon. member is referring to is that reduction which is contained and referred to in the main estimates which were tabled. I presume that is what he is referring to, namely 5,840 person-years, which reflects the policy of the previous Conservative administration.

**Mr. Stevens:** Good policy.

**Mr. Anguish:** Mr. Chairperson, I would like to have the President of the Treasury Board tell me if in fact some of those cuts were in the Canadian Transport Commission in areas of safety regulation, in fact areas where we had two unfortunate accidents lately, one at MacGregor, Manitoba, and the other at Mississauga, Ontario, in which lives were endangered and which involved great cost to the Canadian taxpayer in the clean-up. Have some of those cuts been made in that area? Whether or not it is the policy of the former Conservative government, does the minister not think this should be rethought and that possibly there should not be cuts in the Canadian Transport Commission, since Mr. Macdonell, in his Auditor General's report, said that is one of the areas that should be beefed up and not cut? The minister has in fact chosen to ignore that, I would guess, and will continue to make cuts in areas of safety regulations within the Canadian Transport Commission.

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Chairman, with respect to the Canadian Transport Commission cuts, those cuts, in the view of the commission, were made to achieve operational efficiency. I think it is presumptuous to assume that because of these cuts the safety of the Canadian public has in any way been endangered, or to attribute any accidents to the fact that these cuts took place. The hon. member is making an assumption which is certainly not warranted on the evidence before us at the moment.

**Mr. Anguish:** I assure you, Mr. Chairperson, that the evidence is there. I would like to ask if the estimates that were tabled reflect any money to be paid out by way of incentives to senior bureaucrats to be attracted to this government.

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to have some clarification as to what the hon. member means by "incentives to attract senior bureaucrats to the government." I am afraid I would need somewhat more information in order to respond to that in a meaningful way. What kind of incentives is the hon. member suggesting? Is he suggesting that we offer hiring bonuses to management groups? I am just not clear on the object of the question.

**The Chairman:** The hon. member for The Battlefords-Meadow Lake has less than a minute to comment on that.

**Mr. Anguish:** To my understanding, Treasury Board or officials under the President of the Treasury Board have discussed the possibility of making available large loans at extremely low interest rates in order to attract people to very senior public service positions. Is this in fact true and is it reflected in the estimates?

**The Chairman:** Order. The hon. member's time has expired. He may have an opportunity later to pose his question.

**Mr. MacBain:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak about my impressions as a new member of this House. I want to put before this committee what I perceive to be the position of the people I represent on certain vital issues and what they expect of me, of this government and of the Thirty-second Parlia-