

Follow-up information - OGGO Appearance on May 29, 2023

UNCLASSIFIED - NON CLASSIFIÉ

Question 1:

Mr. Gord Johns: The Treasury Board lists the number of workers for PSPC federal pay administration as about 2,960 for 2021-2022, but the number for planned workers in 2023-2024 is only 761, that's about one-quarter of last year's employees. I'm concerned by this drastic reduction in public servants. This is coming at the time, about the backlog, 209,000 transactions right now sitting in that backlog that our public servants that are wrongfully waiting for, it's totally unacceptable. This trend is that the number of backlog transactions is rising and not diminishing. Minister, can you talk about your plan on outsourcing, and are you planning to outsource the contract going back to the departments for pay delivery, and maybe you can talk about what's being considered.

Mr. Gord Johns: I guess through you, Mr. Chair, I would like to ask if you would be willing to table the staffing plan around the payments and accounts and the federal pay administration question I had earlier, the minister didn't have a chance to respond.

RESPONSE:

Ensuring that Human Resources (HR) and pay operations are supported is a top priority for the Government of Canada.

In addition to the Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) identified in the 2023-24 Departmental Plan (DP) of 761 FTEs, an additional 3,422 FTEs were approved for the 2023-24 fiscal year as per the Budget 2023 announcement to support PSPC in fulfilling its mandate as the Government of Canada's pay administrator, maintain stability, and improve operations.

Please see the table below for a breakdown of FTEs by type of resource:

Type of resources	FTE	Description
Existing	761	Permanent level of resources to ensure payroll integrity and support the compensation community enterprise-wide, as well as to process pay and benefits at the Pay Centre.
Renewal of Sunsetting funding (continued resources)	2904	Resources supplementing the inadequate permanent funding to enable PSPC to fulfill its mandate as the Government of Canada's pay administrator and maintain stability.
New incremental	518	Additional resources to strengthen capacity and work towards achieving stabilization of queue management at the Pay Centre (including eliminating the backlog), while addressing outstanding data integrity vulnerabilities within the program to ensure long-term stability of pay operations.

With this investment, the department can maintain current staffing levels and continue significant efforts to build additional capacity within the Public Service Pay Centre. Since fall 2022, the Pay Centre has onboarded over 570 new hires, 144 of whom joined in May 2023. The Pay Centre is on track to hire an additional 175 resources by end of summer 2023. Increasing the number of skilled compensation advisors at the Pay Centre will allow it to increase the number of transactions it processes every day.

Question 2:

Mr. Gord Johns: We know a lot of small rural communities are struggling to maintain their post offices because Canada Post's postmaster-provided model doesn't pay enough. The starting salary for these rural postmasters is less than \$20/hour. Moreover, these postmasters have to provide a space for the post office for which Canada Post provides a stipend of only \$250/month. Postal service in rural Canada is a lifeline for many people. What concrete steps are you taking as a minister to support Canada Post to move towards a more sustainably financial model for rural post offices? Can you speak about what you're doing to do?

Mr. Gord Johns: I guess through you, Mr. Chair, I would like to ask if you would be willing to table [...] the postmaster-provided model question I had from Canada Post. I'd like to ask for permission from the chair if the committee would support that request.

RESPONSE:

As a Crown corporation, Canada Post operates at arm's length from the Government. It is responsible for managing its own operations in accordance with its enabling legislation, the *Canada Post Corporation Act*. The *Canadian Postal Service Charter* lays out the Government's expectations regarding service standards and related activities in providing postal services that meet the needs of consumers in Canada and affirms that the provision of postal services to rural regions of the country is an integral part of Canada Post's service obligation.

Most rural and remote communities across Canada rely on having a postmaster-provided post office. This model has long been the means used by Canada Post to provide post office service to rural communities. Postmasters are provided a leasing allowance and hourly salary, both of which are established as part of collective bargaining between Canada Post and the bargaining agent, the Canadian Postmaster and Assistants Association. The Government is committed to ensuring that Canada Post provides the high-quality service that Canadians expect at a reasonable price and better reaches Canadians in rural and remote areas.

The Government announced its service first vision for Canada Post in 2018 and we are working together very closely to examine opportunities to improve the financial sustainability of its important operations, including options around the financial model for rural post offices.