

things is this business of contracting out, where there is no consultation and no co-operation. The amount of contracting out is increasing. The employees suspect that it is increasing in part because the government wants to have control without having any arguments with the people who are involved in it.

• (1020)

In part, they feel that it is just simply being handed out to friends of government as a way of rewarding them for whatever. This is a concern. It is a concern expressed even by the Auditor General who raised the question as to whether or not the government is saving money with its contracting out. Indeed the Auditor General went so far as to say the government is not saving money. It is costing the government more to get the service it is getting by contracting out than it was costing previously, with its own public servants doing the work.

The government has been challenged time after time to produce some evidence of what is being saved. Treasury Board has said yes, it is saving money. There are no figures, nothing at all to go on. There is simply a statement to the effect that the government is saving money by contracting out.

If there was any evidence, one would think that the government would be very happy to table it, to publicize it and show where it is saving money. The fact is that the government has declined to do this. It has ignored every invitation to produce some evidence. It has ignored even the Auditor General's invitation to give evidence that it is saving money. As I say, I think the union's case is well supported by the lack of action from government in proving that contracting out is saving money.

This is continuing. Under the legislation before us, there is nothing to slow down that process at all. Certainly the government has said it will look after the employees. That is in the bill to some extent, and a spokesman from Treasury Board has said that this will be done. The employees will be looked after. They will be given job opportunities in other departments.

I suppose we saw some evidence of that last summer when the bill was in to move the National Energy Board from Ottawa to Calgary. There was quite a bit of negotiation between government and the employees of the energy board to make sure they had some opportunity to move with the board.

Government Orders

In the end, there were some who were not going to have jobs. They were going to be let go, and again the promise was held out that something would come up for them as soon as possible somewhere else.

That is just one small example of the kind of contracting out—that is not contracting out, that is another situation—and it is where the employees were going to be looked after. In the legislation and in the discussions they were told that government would look after those employees whose jobs have been done away with due to some contracting out process.

That is one of the problems that the organizations representing the workers is most concerned about, the fact that contracting out is handled in the total absence of any information as to why the government is doing it from a cost saving point of view, evidence that it is really working. Yet the government is going to proceed with it, pursue it and it is not going to discuss any of its actions with the employees.

That is one of the problems but there is another one. There are some union concerns about job reclassification. Once again, management is taking unto itself the authority to do as it sees fit with respect to reclassification. Once again, the union is having no input. It is not being consulted. The members are simply being told what is going to happen to them, when it is going to happen and that does not make for a happy work environment either.

I had occasion to visit the office of one of our major employers in Canada in the private sector. It is a public company operating in the private sector. They were giving me—I am going to be spending more time with them—a rundown on some of their activities and some of the ways in which they are working.

Right at the top of their list is an endeavour to make employees throughout that organization, over 100,000, feel that they are a part of it, that they are not just something that is used in the same way as materials coming in are being processed, but that they are really part of the team that is going to try to make that company successful.

That is what PS 2000 is supposed to be about. It was supposed to make government employees feel they were part of the process of serving the public. In making them feel they are part of it, in making them feel they are one of the partners in that process, they would be happy at