

*Alleged Irregularities in Public Service*

least had courage. There are very few people left who have the courage, to say: "This is my conviction. I will put my job on the line". Remember, he was a man with a wife and seven children to support.

What he did was I think an act of bravery. I do not think it was an act of cowardice. I do not think the man should be pursued, as he is being pursued, to the point of making his name known across the country. I do not care whether he is right or wrong. Personally I think he was right, and I have said so. However, right or wrong, what comparison is there between this man who spoke out for himself and his children—he said he did not want his children raised under the provisions of this plan—and Mr. Spencer, who was, on his admission, an agent of a foreign government. I think that in all this there are certain matters which ought to be considered. This is a question which concerns me deeply.

We must also ask ourselves whether a professional man in the government service must compromise principles, if necessary, respecting any government policy which has not become legislation. There are many professional men in the public service, including those in the medical fields, in engineering, and so forth. What is their position if professionally they feel obliged to differ from conclusions which have been arrived at by a majority of their colleagues or by the government? Must they stay silent, or must they resign?

Is this the kind of civil service we want, where civil servants must knuckle under, and be prepared to compromise principles, if those principles do not happen to agree with government policy? I am raising this question because that is the sort of thing that has been accepted. For some time now any person who has had some disagreement along these lines felt it necessary to resign quietly from the civil service. I am not sure that this ought to be the situation, particularly as it affects professional civil servants.

Should one civil servant be permitted to praise government legislation and be promoted, while another who, talking about the same legislation and deciding that it is not what he wants, is fired without receiving even his severance pay? I know some people think this to be right. To my way of thinking this sort of thing strikes at the root of a person's freedom of speech.

It was never explained in the house, or to this man, why he was discharged. It was assumed, so everybody thought, that it was

[Mr. Aiken.]

because he spoke against the Canada Pension Plan while he was in the government's employ. That was the end of it.

He has not been able to get other employment. On various occasions he has been close to being employed by people who feared that the government would retaliate if they did employ him. He had a speaking engagement at the Sudbury Chamber of Commerce. Then, some time after he left the government service—and this is what bothers me—somebody said that they did not think it in the best interests of the country to hear him because he was opposed to government policy. He received a polite letter from the Chamber of Commerce saying: "We are sorry, but we do not want to get involved in this. We think it best not to hear you".

I do not say that the government was to blame for what happened, because I am sure that no minister would phone the Chamber of Commerce and say: "Do not hear this man". However, the threat is there. The threat is somewhere in the government service. There are people who perhaps feel annoyed at this man because he stood out against the Canada Pension Plan. There are those who feel that, if they become involved with him, they are going to get into trouble with the government.

Most of the people he was associated with, in employment, are required to deal with the government. I think he has been improperly pursued, even following his discharge from the civil service. Assuming that he was properly discharged, why is this man being pursued, because he continued to do what he chose to do? In this particular situation I am asking two things of the government. First, I am asking that an inquiry be convened. I do not ask for a royal commission. However, I do ask that somebody make an inquiry to consider Mr. Kroeker's severance pay and his pension entitlement.

This man ought to be treated in the same way that Mr. Spencer was going to be treated, because Kroeker at least did what he thought was in the interest of his country. As I say, first, I would ask that an inquiry be convened for the purposes I have stated.

Second, I ask that someone in the government should announce that this man will not be pursued, throughout the life of this government, as a result of the real or implied actions of the government, for speaking against what was the pet project of the Secretary of State (Miss LaMarsh), the then