

Adjournment Debate

These are just examples of recommendations made over six years ago in an attempt to improve employer-employee relations in the Public Service of Canada.

I have a letter which was sent by the secretary of the Treasury Board on December 4, 1981. The first paragraph is relevant, and he had reference to 1981:

In March of this year the President of the Treasury Board . . . tabled a report to Parliament entitled "Accountable Management". This report described the government's progress in responding to the recommendations of the Royal Commission of Financial Management and Accountability (the Lambert commission). Among other things, the report outlined the measures that had been or were in the process of being taken to improve our systems for the management of human resources, measures that it was felt responded to the recommendations of the Lambert commission and which took into account the work of the Special Committee on the Review of Personnel Management and the Merit Principle (the D'Avignon committee).

● (2215)

The Lambert commission and the D'Avignon committee—in both of which studies I took a very keen interest—performed their work and submitted their reports subsequent to the tabling of the report of the special joint committee. Both of these works were in some measure influenced by and were the result of the report of the special joint committee. When I look at the legislative program for this parliament I recognize it is going to be extremely difficult to introduce any legislation in the current year. Nevertheless, I plead once again with the President of the Treasury Board to table in the House, so we can study and comment upon it, the legislation of the government to take into account the recommendations of the report.

Mr. Norman Kelly (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, during question period on Friday, February 26, the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) drew the attention of the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) to the fact that that day marked the sixth anniversary of his tabling in this House of the report to Parliament of the Special Joint Committee on Employer-Employee Relations in the Public Service. As everyone knows, that committee had been established to consider the report on employer-employee relations in the Public Service of Canada prepared by Mr. Jacob Finkelman.

The hon. member served as co-chairman of the special joint committee, so it is understandable that he is anxious to know when the official government response to the 72 recommendations in that committee's report could be expected.

Since the reports of Mr. Finkelman and the parliamentary joint committee were released, the Lambert Commission on Financial Management and Accountability and the D'Avignon Committee on the Review of Personnel Management and the Merit Principle have also reported. There are evident relationships among certain of the recommendations of the four reports, and it quickly became apparent that an appropriate response on the part of the government to the special joint committee's report could not be made in isolation from the related recommendations of the other reports.

When the President of the Treasury Board assumed his portfolio after the 1980 general election, he established a

program to have the recommendations of all the reports reviewed in light of present-day circumstances with a view to developing recommendations for legislative change where necessary. Shortly after the review was undertaken, the minister had occasion to note publicly that the thrust of any such review ought to be to improve the existing system of employer-employee relations in the public service so that it, first, works in the mutual interests of both employer and employees, second, offers adequate and reasonable safeguards to the Canadian public, and third, ensures the existence of a collective bargaining system that is capable of operating in everyone's best interests in the 1980s.

I am pleased to inform the House that the review program has now been completed, and cabinet now has before it for consideration a number of recommendations respecting employer-employee relations in the public service. In developing these proposals, the minister has relied heavily on the very fine work done by the special joint committee and the extensive review by Mr. Finkelman.

My colleagues will appreciate that I am unable to reveal the nature of the proposed changes until cabinet approval has been obtained and legislation is drafted and introduced in this House. I can say, though, that the minister is grateful for the continuing interest of the hon. member for Vaudreuil in this important matter and the extensive effort he put into the work of the special joint committee.

JUSTICE AND LEGAL AFFAIRS—NATIONAL MOBILITY OF
LAWYERS

Mr. Stanley Hudecki (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, one of the crucial issues of concern, not only to Canadian lawyers but to Canadians generally, is the national mobility of approximately 30,000 Canadian lawyers. In this age of specialization in the legal profession a whole new approach to national examinations is needed in order to allow Canadian lawyers to move with ease from province to province, as do doctors.

● (2220)

On February 19, 1982, I addressed this issue in a question to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). His response was as follows:

—I am not aware of any hard discussions between the various provincial bars or in the Canadian Bar Association itself. I shall have to report the hon. member's concern on this matter to the Minister of Justice.

I would remind the hon. member, however, that when we discussed the constitutional problem with the provinces, one of our concerns was precisely that shared by the hon. member. We insisted on the importance of having a mobility clause in the Constitution with a view to permitting Canadians of different occupations in society to have the mobility within the Canadian union. Of course, we were partly successful and partly unsuccessful. I share the hon. member's concern in general, and I will report the hon. member's question to the Minister of Justice.

At the present time in Canada, when a lawyer wishes to transfer from one common law provincial bar to another, he is generally required either to re-article and take the bar admission course, or write transfer examinations, depending upon