

*Private Members' Business*

If public servants had the right to denounce such cases of abuse, the government could save millions of dollars every year. The public is well aware of this, and one of its most common criticism is that the government is not careful enough about its spending, especially since Canada faces a huge deficit.

It would be a good idea to draft such a bill in light of the potential savings. This bill would also help restore the credibility of the government and of politicians who, to a certain extent, are held responsible for public service waste and abuse.

If public servants could denounce cases of abuse, this would not only save money but also probably bring to light events or actions endangering public health or safety.

Public servants reporting cases of abuse must be protected. Thus, they would feel more inclined to report or blow the whistle on the conduct of their superiors and coworkers. That is why government employees need the kind of protection this bill is designed to afford them.

There are many examples around the world of governments that have already passed legislation to allow employees to disclose instances of abuse and squandering within the public service. In fact, this public administration philosophy is increasingly popular in the United States.

More than 20 states in the U.S., including major states like New York and California, are reported to have put in place similar legislation enabling public servants to report abuse and protecting them; in some states, the protection of the law even extends to disclosure of abuse and squandering in the private sector. We are light-years behind them in that respect.

And the U.S. is not alone. England also has similar legislation. But we, in Canada, do not. It would be great, of course, if the federal government could act on this. There is every reason to do so. In fact, there is no valid reason not to pass this bill; except perhaps a lack of will on the part of the government. This is not even a partisan issue; it does not have anything to do with being a federalist or a sovereigntist. It is strictly a matter of common sense. As other members mentioned, public servants themselves and the Public Service Alliance have come forward and expressed full support, for the reasons stated previously.

There really is no reason not to pass this bill, because this is a bill that will help the public service operate better and more economically. Why not agree in principle with this bill, as suggested by the hon. member for Saint-Boniface and the representative of the Reform Party? Why not refer it to committee, where improvements can be made if required so that we can go some way toward providing Canada with a piece of legislation enabling public servants to disclose instances of abuse without being subjected to unfair retaliation.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** The member for Portneuf, on a point of order.

**Mr. de Savoye:** Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned previously, I would like to ask the House if there is unanimous consent to find this bill votable.

As we know, Canadians have been waiting for such a piece of legislation. We have the opportunity to have an important in-depth debate which would enlighten members of Parliament as well as the public. Later on, we will have the opportunity, if the House so desires, to vote to refer this bill to a committee.

What we are talking about now is to have two more opportunities to debate this bill. Therefore, I ask the House for its unanimous consent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** The House has heard the terms of the motion presented by the member for Portneuf seeking unanimous consent to find this item votable and to debate it for two more hours.

Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96, this item is dropped for the *Order Paper*.

It being 6.50 p.m., this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.49 p.m.)