

Prime Minister, and I hope the answer from the parliamentary secretary will allow us at least to begin the process of examining the way in which our system is being changed.

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre De Bané (Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of State for Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, that is certainly one of the shabbiest attacks I have had the opportunity to witness since I have been here in this House.

The hon. member who must certainly have at least one ounce of honesty, recognized that Mr. Michael Pitfield is, and I quote, "able and brilliant". Then what is he blaming Michael Pitfield for? I think he did not have the chance I had to work with Mr. Pitfield. For several months, I worked with him when he was deputy minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. May I say to the hon. member that I seldom met a man so much sensible to the performance of his duties, to the opinion of members of parliament and to the wishes of his minister and who did his duty in a way which, I believe, enhanced the prestige of his position. May I remind him that before leaving that position he had been Planning Director of the Prime Minister's Office. He has served as public servant for many years and I think it is utmost shabby to attack in such a contemptible way one of the most competent officials in the Public Service.

Adjournment Debate

Does the hon. member mean that he is a supporter of the so-called in-breeding—it is done in External Affairs—and that public servants should be hired at 25 years of age after university graduation. I feel that it is quite retrograde. He only has to consider private enterprise. Every day, people outside are sought to bring in some fresh blood.

If I had to give my own view, I would say to him that it is unfortunate that it is not done more often in Ottawa. The establishment, and many studies have been made on that issue, exerts too much influence and one of the reasons is that there are not enough competent people from outside coming into public service at higher levels.

Even if the hon. member continues to tarnish the reputations of individuals such as the above-mentioned, without questioning their competence, let him do so! Does the hon. member suggest that the Hon. Paul Martin will not ably discharge his duties? If he thinks so, let him say it frankly. If he thinks that Mr. Paul Gérin-Lajoie does not ably manage the Canadian International Development Agency, let him say so—or Mr. Jim Davey!

Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, I think that the charges of the hon. member are shabby and completely unwarranted.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please. The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.27 p.m.