

Public Service

Mr. Evans: Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to answer a question but if I do that, the hon. member for Regina would have to talk out his own bill.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to ask the hon. member if he realizes that in Saskatchewan, and I think at least four other provinces, no new administration can fire their public servants because of their political beliefs. Only order in council appointees and employees on contracts can be dismissed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is a point of argument not a question.

Mr. Evans: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that if the new government in Saskatchewan finds that it has difficulty with the public service or lacks confidence in it, laws can be passed and public servants could be put in a position where they would be fired. I would not want to see public servants put in a position such as that as a result of some action we may take here without due consideration.

Hon. Bud Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton): Mr. Speaker, it is rather ironic that when we are so often accused of talking out a bill, we find the opposition members using 40 minutes out of the hour on a subject for which we have a genuine concern. The chairman of the Public Service Commission has indicated that he feels it is time that this matter is studied. The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) has also indicated that this subject should be looked into.

I commend the hon. member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) because I know that he honestly and sincerely believes the views expressed in this bill. However, even he has indicated that his bill is imperfect. He then suggested that we do not deal with the bill itself but rather that we deal with its subject matter. It seems to me that if we adopt that approach to a subject as important as this we will be doing a disservice to the people we want to help, namely, the civil servants.

Frankly, I would have been more inclined to support the hon. member if he had moved this particular matter by way of a motion. We could have then considered all of the issues. The hon. member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Evans) has already indicated some of the difficulties which he envisions. He was honest enough to indicate that he was playing the devil's advocate role but he did state that he thinks it is time for the subject to be studied. I believe it should be studied in a more comprehensive way.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hour provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired.

[*English*]

It being 5 p.m., this House stands adjourned until Monday at two o'clock p.m. pursuant to Standing Order 2(1).