

*Government Orders*

then decided he was not fit to do that and arbitrarily placed him on medical leave.

Joe Davey wound up on welfare, could not get back into the job and was off for about a year. Then they got rid of that fire-fighting requirement. He came back to work. He has a degenerative disc problem in his back. Physicians have said that he can go back to work but he cannot spend eight hours a day digging in a ditch—he is a machine operator—as his back will not handle it. He is off again. The manager has said he is on leave.

The personnel services are looking at this and they refuse to deal with it. He is a long-term employee who can go back to work, yet they have placed him in this tenuous situation. The occupational health and safety people have taken a much broader look at it and have said that there is lots of room for him in there. In fact they are putting people into lighter duties who have lower seniority and are less qualified than he is.

However, the two arms of Transport Canada do not deal with each other. It looks as if this individual is going to spend a minimum of two years out of work, probably on social assistance before he gets his job back, if ever.

Maybe the Minister of Labour might consider responding to this as well. What can be done when an organization such as the Government of Canada treats its employees with such contempt? It has farmed the whole problem back to the airport manager who says: "I am just going to get rid of the guy. He is on medical leave of absence until he quits". Each time he has come back.

What kind of relief can be obtained for an individual like Joe Davey who has been absolutely shafted by an employer who seems to hold him in complete contempt? He is the victim of nepotism at the local airport level. The top level of the system would just as soon be rid of him because aging employees are not desired in the organization. They have no intent to show this as an example of what good employee-employer relations are. They would rather treat them with contempt.

Are there any suggestions as to what might be done regarding the possibilities or what the Minister of Labour might do to help Joe Davey and others in that spot?

• (1245)

**Ms. Langan:** Mr. Speaker, I think Joe Davey is the kind of example that this caucus, the New Democrats, tried to address last year when we were addressing the amendments to the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

We were hearing from the government side and the bureaucrats from Treasury Board that the federal government is a very fair, very kind and very caring employer. However there are examples like the one that has just been outlined with regard to Joe Davey, a worker in the last years of his work in the work place who now appears to be finding himself in a situation of being forced off the job and not protected in the long term.

I would suggest to the hon. member who has raised the issue that the first line of defence for Joe Davey is the Public Service Alliance of Canada, his union, and going through the grievance and arbitration process. Failing that I think it would make good sense for the hon. member and myself to document the case and introduce a private member's bill to address this kind of issue. At the same time we can certainly work very hard to make sure that Joe Davey is able to receive a disability pension.

The Minister of Labour is in the House and I am sure he is interested in this kind of case. He is nodding his head so I would assume that he too will take this under advisement to ensure that these kinds of situations do not occur for people who work for the Public Service of Canada.

**Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask one more question. Another enormous difficulty that Joe Davey faces is that once he is put off on medical leave he winds up having to wait a year for it to go through the process. It is so slow. It is almost deliberately held up.

Of course the Public Service Alliance has dealt with this. It has looked at the human rights commission and a variety of other things. It feels he would actually be successful there, but it will take forever to do. In the meantime he has been seriously harmed. He has children and he has a family to take care of. Enormous damage is inflicted on them.