

Business of the House

I have before me a long list, going back to 1950. Other groups have been forced, through legislation, back to work, 24 as a matter of fact. There is one thing different between all of these and what this government is doing today. All of these had attempted collective bargaining. All of these groups had sat down in good faith and attempted to negotiate a settlement.

This government says: "We will not allow a collective agreement to be negotiated. We are going to impose a settlement". How Stalinistic can you be? You say to your employees: "This is the law. This is our position: zero, three and three. If you do not agree to it, we'll use our parliamentary muscle and force it upon you".

With all of these back to work legislations that we have dealt with over the years, never have they been so Draconian.

They have always been back to work legislation with a settlement based on negotiations that had taken place—they were required to back to work as a result—and then subject to an arbitrator's report. In other words, there was always something else attached to the legislation that would treat those involved with some dignity. Not this slap in the face to tens of thousands of public employees across the country.

There are all sorts of reasons why we oppose this particular motion. As we sit here at this moment, the Public Service Staff Relations Board, a quasi-judicial board, struck by an act of Parliament has said on page 10: "The board declares that the employer, Brian Mulroney, has acted contrary to Section 51 of the act and orders the employer to comply with section 51 of the act".

In other words, the board says that the federal government is breaking its own law. The federal government is breaking a law of Parliament.

Some hon. members: Shame.

Mr. Riis: Are we asking them to just ignore this? Of course not. What about the fact that section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms requires people to be treated equally under the law? This piece of legislation flies in the face of section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It says: "We are going to treat our employees unlike anybody else treats their employees, anywhere in the country."

We say that we believe this flies in the face of our own Constitution. It flies in the face of an act of Parliament. It flies in the face of any decent employer's relationship with its employees.

I say, for a whole set of reasons, we will not support this motion. This is a silly motion. It is a desperate motion. I suppose we ought not to be surprised, when we consider that the government introducing this motion is a government that 88 per cent of the people of Canada have lost faith in. Eighty-eight per cent of the people of Canada are saying: "Call an election Prime Minister, because we want to kick you out. We want to change the government". No wonder it is attempting something so drastic.

In closing, I want to say to my hon. friend the government House leader, and when I say "the government" I do not mean him personally, that when the government acts as a bully and pushes people around, humiliates people, fights with people, ridicules people and then asks people to co-operate and be friends, it is a gesture in futility.

I think what we are seeing across the country is 88 per cent of the people rising up in a popular reaction against this government and saying: "We are sick and tired of being bullied by the Prime Minister, his cabinet and his caucus".

Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board and Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words about the motion before the House. I might say at the outset that any time I hear my colleague and friend from Kamloops speak, he always goes over the edge. He always overdoes it. I do not know how many times I have heard him say: "This is the worst that has ever been done anywhere in the world".

I want to speak about the effect of what is going on in the country as a result of the PSAC strike on the people of Canada.

An hon. member: Oh, oh.

Mr. Kempling: Just listen and you might learn something. I had a call to tell me that the lift bridge at Hamilton was going to be blocked by PSAC strikers. They told me they were going to come from both directions and block the bridge, stop the engines of their automobiles and walk away, abandon their cars and leave them there. That was Thursday night before the Monday strike date. What was the purpose of this? The purpose was that there were two ships sitting out on the lake waiting to come into the harbour and there were 10 ships due in over the weekend.