

*Private Members' Business*

In most cases, we have good people working on the staff of members on the Hill. The test has to be when they go for the job that they are the best qualified for that job.

We have the Public Service 2000 program. The Public Service is trying to create a more efficient and effective organization style. If it is to try to make more from less, if we are continually squeezing the dollars by which they operate, yet increase demands placed on them, if we ask more for less, then we have to honour some of their requirements. They need to feel they have our confidence and trust. They need to see that job development possibilities are there. They need to know that their successes will be duly rewarded. They have to know that the development steps that they require in their career paths are going to be open for them. In my opinion, this back door, this revolving door of Bill C-225 would go a long way to destroying any of the progress that we have made to date and will make on the Public Service 2000 process.

• (1820)

The hon. member in his speech mentioned the situation of after an election result where it is not inconceivable that there would be several hundred staff members in motion. God only knows we would love to be able to ensure that they all have work some place, but we have to consider the impact that these hundreds of people would have on the career civil servants. They have first priority for those jobs. They have first priority to their career paths and we have to ensure that they retain that priority.

We try to be more fair, more just, to our staff and in the process of that will become less fair and unjust to the civil service. I even question that the priority we would be giving them would even pass the test of our Charter of Rights.

There may be, as the hon. member has suggested, a number of faults with the current act. I maintain and will argue that the solution is not found in this bill. There is no question that we have an obligation to our staff, but by eliminating the fair and progressive job competitions we will have taken a step backwards. We have the key to the front door. Let us use it. We do not want our staff having to enter in through the back door.

**Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West):** Mr. Speaker, I am a little astounded to see this bill coming from the

quarter it comes from. It just strikes me as somewhat elitist to be seeking special privileges for those who choose to work with members of Parliament. I am quite surprised to see that kind of bill coming from the New Democratic Party.

The bill proposes to amend section 39(4) of the Public Service Employment Act so that the staff of members of Parliament have a special priority to be appointed to the Public Service as the bill says, in priority to all other persons. If that is not elitism and preferential treatment, I do not know what is.

The argument that this privilege is currently enjoyed by the staff of ministers I do not believe justifies extending and multiplying by many times the number of people who would qualify over and above all other persons who might be eminently suitable for employment in the Public Service, to be appointed without competition, without being measured on their merit against anyone else who might be equally qualified for this job.

It says quite simply that there are three ways a person can qualify for this privilege. One, if they were an employee of the Public Service before coming to a member's office. Second, if they were qualified for appointment to the Public Service while serving in the member's office or, third, if they simply can endure and can manage to prevail in a member's office for three years. I want to stress again that they are then eligible for appointment to the Public Service on a priority basis in preference to all others and without competition.

We have a Public Service Commission that was established 80 years ago to ensure that the Public Service did not become the place of employment of those who had friends in office, but that it became a place of employment that impartially served all Canadians without deference to one political point of view or another, and without being beholden for the jobs that are held in the Public Service to any politician or to any position of privilege.

I am surprised for a second reason that this bill has been initiated by the NDP. It appears to enjoy the support of the NDP members who are in the House, as well as the member who is presenting it.

**Mr. Young (Beaches—Woodbine):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member should listen to what I said.