

Government Orders

Madam Deputy Speaker: As far as Motion No. 16 is concerned, is there unanimous consent for the wording to be changed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

An hon. member: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Consent is not given. On a point of order, the hon. member from Kingston and the Islands.

Mr. Milliken: Madam Speaker, I ask the hon. member who said no to reconsider. The hon. member for Ottawa West has put forward a very reasonable explanation as to why the wording of her motion is incorrect. She has asked to put another motion before the House. Apparently it is in order. Notice has been given. It is an unusual request but there has been a reasonable explanation offered. I would have thought that the hon. member might reconsider and allow this to proceed.

An hon. member: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Consent is not given.

Ms. Langan: Madam Speaker, I guess I am quite concerned because it was through no fault of the hon. member that the incorrect wording appeared before the House in the first place.

It would seem to me to be a little bit mean-spirited in view of the fact that the hon. member had made every effort to have the correct wording before this House and is now seeking leave to ensure that it is correct.

I would urge as well that the hon. member from the government side of the House reconsider and allow this wording to stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Am I to understand that there is a change of heart?

An hon. member: No.

Mr. Keyes: Madam Speaker, I wonder if we could get an explanation from the hon. member for Burlington why he will not agree to this particular motion.

Madam Deputy Speaker: When unanimous consent is sought members who do not give consent do not have to give reasons. Sometimes they do and sometimes they do not.

I am in a situation now where the motion that will be debated by the House is as written on the Order Paper.

I would like to answer an earlier question by the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam. Upon a division, the yeas and the nays shall not be entered upon the minutes unless demanded by five members. It is Standing Order 45. Nowhere does it say that five members must be sitting in their places when they are asking for a vote to be taken.

• (1620)

Ms. Langan: Madam Speaker, I would like to have clarification at this point with what has just taken place. Are we now debating Motions Nos. 15 and 18?

Madam Deputy Speaker: We are debating Motions Nos. 15, 16, 18, 19, and 23.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): I would like to rise particularly on Motions Nos. 15 and 18 which I have presented. These motions are central to the bill as we have it before us.

This bill and the vision of Public Service reform put forward by the Public Service 2000 report is very complex. It modifies the existing definition of the use of the merit principle. It modifies it in the appointment or promotion of workers in the Public Service.

Representatives of the vast majority of the workers who appeared before the committee—and we had a long list of people who presented, including the Public Service Alliance of Canada; the Professional Institute of the Public Service; and the Economists, Sociologists and Statisticians Association. Those three major unions, among others, all condemned this edition, the edition that is found in this section of the bill, as an attack on the merit principle.

The clause we are talking about modifies the traditional definition of merit and that is the best qualified as compared to all others. It modifies it by allowing the Public Service Commission to appoint persons based on the competence of a person as measured by such standards of competence as the commission may establish.

We believe that in fact the measure of competence, the best qualified person as compared to all others, is a principle that should remain entrenched in this legislation.