

Adjournment Debate

With reference to distribution of the document entitled "Proposed Changes to the Public Service Staff Relations Act", the news release indicated the following:

It said Treasury Board "seeks to sell Bill C-22 by inference, omission, distortion and misrepresentation".

I have many good friends in the staff associations. I should like to tell them that they are not helping by this kind of attack.

I should like to refer to the document entitled: "The Truth About Bill C-22". It reads in part as follows:

For example, comparisons would not be made with *municipal* and provincial public employees who do similar work, but solely with workers employed by profit-making organizations.

That is simply not true. Outside employment generally will be the standard. This will be developed by the new research bureau which now will be directed by an independent board, half of its representation coming from the employers and half from the employees.

The case which unions will be making is impaired by intemperate remarks and statements such as those attributed to the president of the Public Service Alliance, Mr. Stewart. I just cannot help but call to the attention of staff associations that Bill C-22 will have full and complete debate when it receives second reading in the House. Then it will be referred to committee. There will be every opportunity for spokesmen of employees and staff associations to appear and give their points of view. If there is reason to believe, as has been asserted, that comparisons will not be made with municipal and provincial public employees, then let us look at the clauses in the bill. If amendments have to be made, they can be made.

There have been substantial changes to Bill C-28, for example, the exclusions for over \$33,500. That is out of the new bill now. This can be accomplished only when there is an atmosphere on both sides of moderation, willingness to meet, and willingness to consult.

I cannot help but observe at this stage that this session cannot have that long a life. We will adjourn shortly, after dealing with the amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act. In the new year we will deal with Bill C-12, the indexing of pensions. That will take a while. There is a heavy legislative agenda. I would think there is a high probability that parliament perhaps will be prorogued shortly after Easter or thereabouts. We are looking at something like 12 weeks or 13 weeks of House sittings in 1979. It will be a very tight schedule if Bill C-22 is to be enacted.

If Bill C-22 is to be considered on its merits, I trust and hope that spokesmen for the staff associations, in a spirit of very careful research and the exercise of good, considered judgment, will make preparations to appear before the committee in order to give us the benefit of their views. I am prepared to listen as are many other people in the House. Only

if they follow that route will they have the kind of legislation they want to see on the books.

● (2227)

Mr. Thomas H. Lefebvre (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis) has demonstrated once again his unfailing interest in those subjects which affect his constituents greatly, and his vigilance in bringing these concerns to the attention of the government and parliament. I will not reply by debating with him the merits of Bill C-22, but rather reply to the original question he raised in the House as to the cost of the booklet which was distributed to all public servants.

He inquired first about the cost of this publication. Based on cost estimates from the Department of Supply and Services, the minister advised him on Thursday, December 14 last, that the unit cost was in the vicinity of nine cents per copy. I am pleased to note that the final cost may in fact be lower than this estimate. I am informed by the Department of Supply and Services that the actual cost will be \$24,950.60, representing a unit cost of seven cents per copy. This includes printing and distribution costs, plus a service fee, that are being charged by the Department of Supply and Services. Bulk quantities were supplied directly to departments, which in turn were responsible for their distribution within their organizations.

Hon. members will recall the extensive campaign waged by public sector unions against the predecessor to Bill C-22, namely, Bill C-28. Public service unions prepared briefs on Bill C-28 and distributed them to their members. They referred to Bill C-28 in the newspapers and other publications.

My colleagues and I, as well as members of departmental management, heard many concerns from employees concerning the fact that the employer was not explaining the bill and its rationale to employees. The government decided that when a successor bill to Bill C-28 was introduced, an effort should be made to inform employees on the provisions of the bill. This booklet is the result of that effort.

The hon. member mentioned, and rightly so, that when this bill comes before the House of Commons there will be a full debate. Witnesses will be asked to appear before the committee. The Public Service Alliance and other unions in the public service will be free to come forward and answer questions and testify before the committee. I believe the government has acted rightly. I am sure those employees who read this booklet will be happy that the government has prepared it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at two o'clock p.m.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.30 p.m., without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.