

*Government Orders*

everyone concerned agrees that it is time for new legislation that will provide for changing times and changing economic conditions as well.

After considerable discussion over the years the Prime Minister announced in 1989 that the government would be bringing this in as a major initiative. It took about a year to get the white paper on PS 2000 tabled. It was supposed to have come out of discussions between Treasury Board on the one side and the employees' organizations on the other. Treasury Board's spokespeople insisted that there had been real communication between the two, real discussions, real consultation, but the representatives of the employees unanimously said that there had not been any real communication, that there had not been any real discussion. They might have been talking one side to the other but no one was really listening. There was no real consultation, no real attempt to arrive at a common ground with respect to the major changes being made. This was perhaps one of the main concerns of the employee organizations.

Anyone who has been in public affairs, in the public eye, anyone who has been a member of Parliament in recent years, knows that there has been increasingly bad blood between the employees and the employers in the civil service. That has been evident. I suppose the hardest evidence we have had of that, of which the whole community became aware, was last year when there was the job action, when there was work stoppage, not total stoppage but significant work stoppage.

The evidence was there that the labour organizations themselves doubted whether they would be able to get their employees out on the picket line. There was real doubt within the labour organizations generally, not just within labour organizations representing government employees.

The government was confident, and I think this was obvious from the way they handled the situation at the time, confident that the labour organizations would fail to get any large number out on the picket lines. There were polls taken, there were votes taken and the votes in some areas were not very strong in favour of the strike, in other areas they were strong. In general, there was this real doubt within the labour movement itself and certainly the government was confident that the organizations could not get their workers out.

The fact is they did get them on the picket lines. Sure there were problems within the organizations but never-

theless there was widespread support for the work action taken. I submit that was excellent evidence there were problems between the employers and the employees, problems that have not been resolved to this time.

From what employee organizations had seen of PS 2000, the white paper, and from the discussions they have had, there was real doubt that any of the changes being suggested were going to improve the situation between workers and management.

That was what it was all about. That is what PS 2000 was supposed to achieve, an improvement in relations between the employees and the managers who were running the government service. The employee organizations doubted whether anything in this would improve employer-employee relations. If we do not do that, there is no point in going through this exercise at all.

There have been discussions since the legislation was introduced and there are still problems, but at least we are now contemplating the bill going to a legislative committee. In that venue, there will be an opportunity for the employer's and employees' representatives to sit down together and to bring to the attention of the public what the real concerns are on both sides. I am sure there are concerns on both sides although not very many on the part of managers since in the opinion of the employees, at least, the managers have achieved everything in this legislation that they could hope to achieve and have given up little to the workers.

If that feeling prevails, if there is not something changed as a result of the discussions or if there are no changes in the bill itself, then it is not going to bode well for the future and relations will not improve. The people who will suffer will not be just the employees but the people receiving the services that the employees are providing.

I said that members of Parliament are very much aware of the bad feeling because they hear constantly from people in their ridings who are having trouble getting what they feel is a reasonable level of service from public servants. The public servants themselves are not happy in what they are doing and some express that in the way they deal with people who are coming in with their problems.

There are some problems that are dealt with and yet not dealt with in a way that make the employees any happier with what is being proposed. One of the main