

administration where the right to strike should be prohibited or allowed.

As the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas) pointed out so well, in cases when the right to strike would not be permitted, well, there would be a right of appeal. Whatever the formula to be adopted, the bill should be democratic, modern, in line with democratic evolution, the standards of labour legislation, and they should try to introduce a formula which would be as close as possible to the privileges allowed to employees in private enterprise, with the necessary differences in certain fields from the point of view of public and national responsibility of government.

Therefore, I feel that the right to strike should be considered by this committee and should be subject to strict restrictions, so that it could be used only in the fields where they would decide, after having exhausted all the negotiation procedures and, therefore, it should be the ultimate recourse to be taken after sheer injustice or absolutely inflexible stubbornness.

There is another point I would very much like to see defined in the bill, but I am very much afraid it will not be in the sense I would hope for. This follows on a grievance which is most important and essential to the future of the Canadian federation.

It would be most important to provide for the definition of the bargaining unit. You are doubtless aware of the very significant and substantial grievance arising today between groups of employees of crown corporations concerning some rulings of the National Labour Relations Board to the effect that bargaining units are considered, not as defined by the Industrial Disputes Act, but considered by precedent and by repeated similar rulings that the bargaining unit must be strictly on the national level.

I should like the government to consider the problems of the Canadian crisis revealed to us in considerable depth by the report of the Laurendeau-Dunton commission on bilingualism and biculturalism, because French Canadians in the civil service have been badly discriminated against in one way or another, intentionally or not, in a concerted or inadvertent manner.

I know several French Canadians who wanted to make a dynamic contribution to the administration of their country, but who did not evince interest in the civil service because they were treated as inferiors and

always kept in second and third class positions. The better salaries were the private preserve of another group.

It is important to provide in this legislation, when we are looking for an efficient remedy to this government problem, that the bargaining unit be considered on the national level as well as local, because some civil servants in the province of Quebec have particular problems. Whatever may be said, Quebec is not a province like the others.

This is established by facts, by theory and by the people's feelings. Civil servants in the province of Quebec have particular problems also with the government. That is the reason why it is important. It takes nothing away from national unity but, on the contrary, it might strengthen it. It is not always by pushing someone aside or by prodding him that you make a friend out of him. One can make a friend out of an intelligent man.

I should be in favour of a study by the committee upon the advisability of establishing the bargaining unit at the local level, so that the group of French Canadian employees may receive an equal treatment within the civil service.

● (6:10 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Benson: Mr. Chairman, after the full statement by the Prime Minister in introducing this legislation it is not my intention at this time to speak at any length, but I will expand on my remarks at second reading of the bill. I know that everyone is very anxious to pass this resolution and to see the actual legislation proposed by the government.

However, I should like to assure hon. members, in answer to a few of the questions raised by the hon. member for Carleton and the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam, that reclassification of the civil service has been carried on with every possible speed since this government came into power. We appointed the Heeney committee which reported to us, following which we immediately asked the Civil Service Commission to proceed with reclassification.

Reclassification is well under way and it involves a massive task, there being more than 200,000 civil servants. It is expected to be completed so that, in the event this legislation is passed, we will be able to commence collective bargaining this October with some reclassification and with the complete reclassifications by October of 1967. I think this