

Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act

employees are unionized. In the NDP caucus here on Parliament Hill we have had a collective agreement since 1977. At times it has been a bit difficult to administer because we are not a formally recognized employer and the staff association is not a formally recognized union. Nonetheless, we have been able to function and we have made that agreement work in good faith. The employees here in the House want to make such an agreement work. We should recognize that these people serve our meals, deliver our messages and provide an enormous range of services. They do our research, get our books and magazines, provide clippings. They handle parliamentary relations, and represent us in our dealings with Parliaments and parliamentarians around the world. They help staff our committees and make this Parliament look good and work effectively. There is no reason, given the importance of those functions, that we should give them the second class status and second rate form of unionization proposed in Bill C-45.

My caucus has decided that, although we recognize the need for unionization, we do not believe this Bill is anywhere near good enough. That is why we have decided, while we are not going to speak on the Bill forever, if this is all that is available we are going to have to live with it but we are going to oppose it because it simply does not live up to what we should be providing. Our Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) worked in labour relations as a negotiator, mediator and conciliator for many years. He first came to public prominence as counsel to the Cliche inquiry into labour relations in Quebec in the 1960s. He knows intimately the stuff of labour relations. He, of all the Government and cabinet Members, should realize that the House of Commons should be looked to by employers and employees across our country as a model of what labour relations should be, a model for co-operation, employee involvement, and labour-management harmony which can exist where there is a real commitment on both sides. There are Members on the Government side who were terrified about the fact that people working in the cafeterias might actually go on strike if they were governed by the Canada Labour Relations Act.

Mr. Lewis: That is nonsense.

Mr. Cassidy: Then why is the Government seeking to override the CLRB, first by court challenges and now by proceeding with Bill C-45? The employees here have certification according to the decision handed down by the CLRB today.

Why on earth can we not demonstrate that other areas currently being discussed between Public Service unions and Treasury Board for inclusion in joint determination should be the same as far as the House of Commons is concerned? There is a very serious problem in the classification and staffing of House of Commons employees. There is no outside body monitoring those decisions. If you are a member of the Public Service of Canada the Public Service Commission does that job. they do not do it perfectly well all the time, as the Auditor General's report pointed out last week, but there is an outside and supposedly impartial authority which looks at those deci-

sions. That will not be the case with the people working here, according to this Bill. Yet it was precisely that which drove many of those employees to sign cards and form a union.

I would point out as well that there are real problems in a very practical sense in the harassment these employees have gone through having to sign, re-sign and sign again their union cards. The CLRB has indicated what it believes the bargaining unit should be. If the Government is determined to move forward on this Bill, it should at least indicate that it accepts those classification decisions. One thousand employees have signed union cards. The Government should amend this Bill in order to ensure that those cards signed under the CLRB will be acceptable for the Public Service Staff Relations Board rather than forcing the employees to sign again, in some cases for the fifth time, in order to form a union. We, as parliamentarians, have to accept the fact that we have been bad managers. We have been bad employers. We have not done the job we should. The Government House Leader (Mr. Hnatyshyn) is here and I am directing these comments to him because he has a chance to exercise some leadership here.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Which I am doing.

Mr. Cassidy: He can act in a very positive way. I suggest that he accept the CLRB jurisdiction and certification. If not, at the very least accept the decisions made—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order!

Some Hon. Members: Order!

• (1730)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order! If the Hon. Member wishes to carry on with his debate, he may do so tomorrow if Bill C-45 is before the House. He will have six minutes remaining plus a 10 minute question and comment period.

It being 5.29 o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—PUBLIC BILLS

[English]

CRIMINAL CODE

AMENDMENT RESPECTING GUN CONTROL

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East) moved that Bill C-205, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (gun control) be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I rise once again in the House to plead with Hon. Members to implement stronger measures for