

What I am saying is that until 1984 there were Liberal Governments for almost all of the time that I have been in this place, except for the short period of time when the present Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) was Prime Minister. The Liberal Government could have indicated at any time to people who work on the Hill that if they wanted to join a union then they could do so and that legislation would be enacted giving them the right which other workers have to bargain collectively, if they could sign up the members. There was never any indication that members of Liberal Governments approved of that measure.

I say to the Hon. Member that there were plenty of indications. He does not have to take my word for it. He can talk to the people who now lead the union which has applied for certification and which will receive recognition once this Bill is passed. The fact is that there was never any indication that the Liberals supported such a move. In fact, there was every indication that the Liberals looked on that type of idea and opposed it.

We have very clearly indicated that there are substantial portions of this Bill which are not satisfactory. This Bill does not give employees the rights which they would have if they worked in the private sector. Nor does it give them all the rights which they would have if they fell under the provisions of the Public Service Staff Relations Act. We have indicated our opposition to those failures. We brought forward a number of amendments which would have given them the rights which other workers enjoy. Those amendments were turned down by the Government.

We are dissatisfied; and we have said that again and again. We know that in the future there will be changes. We hope, and we know, that there will be changes for the better to the legislation. The employees on the Hill need this legislation. They need the right to bargain collectively today more than ever because, added to all the difficulties which they have had up until now, including the absolute ability of the administration to change the rules, working conditions and job classifications, there is the determination of this Government to cut back on the Public Service.

We know that there have been discussions about privatizing the cafeteria and the Parliamentary Restaurant. We know that a substantial number of permanent employees who operate the consoles at committee meetings which record the proceedings have been let go or have been retired and are being replaced by part-time contract employees. We know that the numbers of people involved in language training for Members of Parliament and others are being reduced. More than ever the employees need the right to bargain collectively. We have been saying that for years. We know that this Bill lacks a great deal but it will pass. With all its imperfections, it is the most to which the Government would agree. We regret that and oppose the refusal of the Government to pass the kind of legislation to which we believe employees are entitled, the same kind of legislation that other employees in both the private and public sector enjoy.

### *Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act*

• (2100)

We know that this Bill will pass tonight. I would simply say that I find it to be strange, to say the least, to hear long and laudatory speeches made by Liberal Members urging that this Bill not only pass but that it be improved upon. They are calling for all those things which they failed to do or would not do when they were in Government.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Questions or comments? Debate.

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few moments to speak on Bill C-45. As I have indicated to all Hon. Members, I had the privilege at one time of being an employee of the House of Commons. The working conditions that have been described by various Hon. Members are, by and large, accurate. I know this because I was there and had the personal opportunity to see just what kind of benefits were afforded, just what kind of benefits were denied and most of all, just what kind of benefits were available at one time but were later denied to employees. It is that particular area about which I wish to speak.

I should not let the remarks of the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) go by. He asked where Liberal Members of Parliament were during the last Government and why they did not bring these issues to the forefront of the House of Commons at that time. I know where I was at that time. I was one of those employees myself so that takes care of this particular Member of Parliament.

The Hon. Member asked what the Liberals did for the collective rights of public servants. I would like to remind him that the collective bargaining rights public servants now enjoy were, in very large part, passed by Liberal administrations. I am sure he knows that and it was merely an oversight on his part that he did not mention it before.

I recognize that the Bill before us today is not as complete as I would like it to be. However, a draft of the present Bill or a similar Bill was prepared by the previous Government before the unfortunate event of September 4, 1984, an event which will soon be rectified. The Hon. Member for Winnipeg North asked what evidence existed that the Liberal Party wanted to enhance the collective bargaining rights of public servants. I have given him some examples of such evidence.

I should also remind all Hon. Members who were here before of how we got into the situation that exists at the House of Commons in which employees increasingly need a mechanism to air grievances and correct the unfair treatment to which they have been subjected. In order to discuss that issue, we should recall that the staff of the House of Commons has increased in rather great measure over recent years. This is not something that existed 30 years ago or even 20 years ago. This is something that grew out of the expansion of Parliament.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, as you have been here for a number of years although you are still a very young man, and as I recall because I was a staff member, during your first