

Mr. Speaker, there are two points I would like to raise in the House today. The first one concerns what is happening in the National Capital Region to federal public servants, who always seem to end up bearing the bount of the cuts the Government is making or will decide to make. As we all know, the National Capital Region has a much higher density of public servants than any other area. There are about 102,000, I believe.

It is therefore obvious that the cuts announced by the Government will have an impact on this population, which I would call a second class population considering the way these people are being treated by the Government. The upshot is that several thousand Public Service employees are going to lose their jobs, and this will have a major impact on the National Capital Region and will depress the economy of the Ottawa-Hull area. Mr. Speaker, when I refer to the Ottawa-Hull area, I am in fact referring to the territory covered by the National Capital Region, Ottawa-Hull.

Mr. Speaker, what I find surprising is that with all this concern in the Public Service today, and especially in the Ottawa-Hull region, no one seems to be defending these public servants who are either losing or about to lose their jobs, and meanwhile, there are people in the Government who are doing everything in their power to urge them to leave, to resign. People are being harrassed in the Public Service today, in order to reduce the number of public servants in the Ottawa-Hull area, and I am sure that this is happening across Canada as well.

I am surprised that the Public Service Alliance has not reacted to these goings-on. I wonder whether it is really concerned about protecting the interests of public servants and about the fact they are disturbed about employment cuts in the National Capital Region, but in any case, the Public Service Alliance does not seem to be moving on the subject at all.

However, I remember that when the Public Service Alliance had problems, these people would come and see us and ask us why we didn't do more to protect public servants.

At this point, I think I ought to ask them the same question: What are you doing about the fact that your public servants are about to lose a considerable number of jobs and about the harassment that is becoming the rule throughout the federal Public Service?

Mr. Speaker, there is another problem, which brings me to the Nielsen Report tabled a few days ago, and it concerns the National Capital Commission. When I consider what has been said or written about the National Capital Commission I have the impression that somebody wants to belittle the capital of Canada, in the sense that, for all practical purposes, the national capital of Canada would simply become a dull city like so many others in this country.

Mr. Speaker, let us not forget that the capital of a country is the centre of the national soul. Apparently we in the National

Borrowing Authority Act

Capital Region are unable to realize that there has to be a national centre where all Canadians will feel at home. Unfortunately it would seem that the Nielsen Commission wants to abolish the National Capital Commission and make it a part of the Department of Public Works.

In the House of November 8, 1985, Mr. Speaker, I was somewhat wary when I asked the following question to the Minister of Public Works concerning the possible abolition of the National Capital Commission: "In view of the fact that there has apparently been no announcement as to future responsibilities of the National Capital Commission, would the Minister tell the House if there is any truth to the rumours that the National Capital Commission will be abolished or that its operational responsibilities will fall under the Department of Public Works." That is exactly what has now been proposed in the Nielsen Report. The Minister replied at that time: Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member is worried by rumours, I wish to tell him on one hand that I think he has nothing to be worried about. Mr. Speaker, I think I had reason to be concerned. On the other hand, the Minister went on to say, the Nielsen Commission, as everyone knows, should bring forward a rather comprehensive report by the end of the year. In the context of this report, I am much more optimistic than the Member for Hull-Aylmer as regards the future of our beautiful capital.

● (1530)

Well, Mr. Speaker, the cat is out of the bag. They are more or less violating the capital of Canada through what amounts to the abolition of the National Capital Commission.

Mr. Speaker, people are deeply shocked because according to the task force report, the National Capital Commission has shown a lack of concern for public money when it signed opened agreements. For instance, there was this agreement with the Province of Quebec calling for road construction with cost shared equally, without spending limits or time schedules.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, section 10(2)(e) of the Act states that the National Capital Commission must "cooperate or engage in joint projects with, or make grants to, local municipalities or other authorities for the improvement, development or maintenance of property of the National Capital Region."

Mr. Speaker, ever since Queen Victoria decided in 1899 that Ottawa would be the capital of Canada, some 20 years after Ottawa had been designed as the Canadian capital, the Government set up the Ottawa Improvement Commission with a mandate to provide the capital with a national character and atmosphere which it had great difficulty to maintain over the years. This institution, the forerunner of the National Capital Commission, gave the National Capital its true identity through arrangements with both Ontario and Quebec sides of the Ottawa River. It had greatly favoured the Ontario side when, in the 1930's the then Prime Minister had a vision, just