

CHANGES IN CANADA'S PUBLIC SERVICE

(Continued from P. 1)

Beyond structural adjustment, there lies a less predictable but equally necessary set of changes in staff relations. The official side cannot be paternalistic or in any way insensitive in its dealings with employee organizations. On the other hand, employee organizations will have to be selective in formulating their demands and precise in developing their supporting arguments. This kind of approach on both sides must be directed by a feeling of genuine equality, joint responsibility and mutual respect. This is implicit in the contemplated system.

The idea of managerial responsibility must of course, be given great emphasis if the system of collective bargaining in the public service is to be more than a pale shadow of the genuine article. None of you is better aware than I am of the problems we shall all face in trying to separate what someone has called, rather inelegantly, the "employee sheep" from "management goats". But, for purposes of collective bargaining, as well as for a great many other good reasons, related to efficiency and good administration, that line must and will be drawn.

Most of you here tonight probably are familiar with the criticism, directed at the public service in recent years over its traditional failure to give sufficient responsibility to a clearly identified management group. Some of this criticism has been ill-informed but some, I think, has been justified. In this regard, I believe that the requirements of improved efficiency and of effective collective bargaining cannot help but support one another.

MAINTENANCE OF CO-OPERATIVE TRADITIONS

I should not, however, like my emphasis tonight on the need for a greater sense of managerial responsibility to be taken as a suggestion that the public service should move away from its co-operative traditions towards any narrow employer-employee relation that would emphasize conflict of interests. My own experience in many areas of public service and human relations has led me to believe that those relations that are rooted in a feeling of equality and mutual respect are most likely to engender co-operation.

There are many outstanding examples in the private sector of the positive contribution collective bargaining can make to the increased efficiency of an organization and the welfare of its members. I have no hesitation in saying that, when we have made our adjustments, we shall not only realize both these positive achievements but our public service and the Government of Canada will also better serve our ultimate masters, the Canadian people....

BILINGUAL PROBLEM

We in Canada have become increasingly aware in the last two or three years of the need to provide more adequately for the French-speaking people of our country to participate in full in their own language in all aspects of our national life. We whose mother-tongue is English have not, I think, been previously conscious of the extent to which we have failed adequately to provide for the use of the French language. Surely we can agree that French-speaking Canadians should rightly expect to be able to use their language in participating in the national life of a country which recognizes two official languages.

This does not mean that every Canadian must learn or must speak two languages for everyday use. Whether he learns the two or not is, in any event, primarily a matter for decision, not by the federal, but by the provincial governments, for they have sole responsibility for education, including the teaching of language to the young - the time to learn two languages.

But, as a Canadian, I hope that every Canadian will have the opportunity to learn Canada's two languages - especially as there are large areas of Canada where such knowledge is essential.

Having said this, however -- that it is reasonable that French-speaking people should be able to use their own language, especially in dealing with the Government of their country, or in participating in the work of the Government of their country -, does not mean that every employee of the public service must become bilingual. Any such standard or expectation would be unrealistic and unreasonable. In a country of the nature and size of Canada, we cannot expect that all people are going to be bilingual; and, equally, we cannot contemplate a situation where a person who is not bilingual has no place in the public service.

What we must contemplate is that the services of government should be available to citizens in their own language. We should also contemplate that, ultimately, it will be possible for any officer of the public service to deal with at least some of his superiors in his own language, that he will not be in a position where he must always use the language with which he is less familiar than his own. We hope that, ultimately, the most senior officers in all branches of the public service will be able to handle the public business competently and effectively in both languages.

In working toward that objective, in moving to make the services of government available in both languages and open to both English and French-speaking employees, we must guard against prejudicing the position of people already in the service. We must take great care that no injustice or injury is done to the prospects of advancement by people now in the public service who came here to provide the best service that they can to Canada, but who speak only one language....

Corrigendum to C.W.B., Volume 20, No. 5

Page 2, Column 1, second sentence:

The statement that an immigration office has been opened in the Philippines is incorrect; no such office has been established.