

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House live in hope. If we continue to keep doing the right things it will only be a matter of time, brother. Just stay put.

● (1630)

I want to get to the question I have for the Hon. Member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet). When his Party was in Government there were constant rumblings and rumours. The Hon. Lloyd Francis revealed some of those not so long ago. Apparently there were very bad practices going on. The odd Liberal is known to have got into the House in some position before he rose to be a Member of Parliament. It is known that those practices which were very detrimental to the collective rights of workers on this Hill always existed.

We in the New Democratic Party consistently asked the Government to give collective bargaining rights to employees on Parliament Hill. The Liberal Government of the day, in which the Hon. Member for Papineau was a cabinet Minister, consistently refused to do that. At least the Conservative Government put Bill C-45 on the floor of Parliament. I do not agree with everything in the Bill. I hardly think I would agree 100 per cent with anything the Conservatives could do in labour legislation. In fact, I do not think I could agree with 90 per cent or even 75 per cent. But at least the Conservatives put the matter on the table for discussion and debate.

Members of the Liberal Party are now doing a lot of pious breast-beating. They talk about how the Bill does not do some things and should do others. They talk about the great rights of workers. But when the Liberal Party was in government, it was the lousiest in terms of how it treated the workers on the Hill. It was awful. Was it the Hon. Member being struck by lightning on the way across the Chamber from the government benches to the Opposition benches which brought about this conversion?

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member in his preliminary remarks mentioned that he was in the House of Commons for a little while until 1980. He has just returned. During the long period between 1980 and 1984 he was indeed absent and perhaps forgot to check the record and does not realize what was done by the previous Government in favour of employees, particularly by the then Minister of Labour who amended the Canada Labour Code on safety and security. This was asked for by the workers and given to them by legislation.

I just want to remind my colleagues that there was legislation presented in this House in favour of employees, including Hill employees. Legislation covering health and safety rights for federal employees, including Hill employees, was presented. The legislation, I believe, was Bill C-24. It allowed the Hill employees to be covered at least in relation to health and safety.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Collective bargaining?

### *Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act*

**Mr. Ouellet:** I made my view known publicly in the House of Commons while I was still a Member of the Government. I asked for legislation to deal with the Hill employees. Therefore, I do not have to defend my record. My record speaks for itself.

I want to say to my friends in the New Democratic Party that they are not the sole possessors of the right to defend workers. They sometimes tend to forget that. Although they might have some good friends in the hierarchy of the labour movement, there are other Members of Parliament from all Parties who have been fighting for workers. They have been representing workers and have been sympathetic to unions' demands in the past and currently. I can assure the Hon. Member that I will personally continue to fight for workers and for unions' demands in my career in politics.

**Mr. Ernie Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to join in this debate on Bill C-45 which relates to the question of collective bargaining for the staff of the House of Commons, the Senate and the Library of Parliament.

I note the question before us this afternoon is an amending motion for second reading a month hence—a one month hoist rather than a six-month hoist—but whatever the period of time involved, I want to speak in support of that amending motion because this not a Bill which deserves to become part of the statute law of Canada.

If we are to become concerned about the rights of parliamentary Hill staff and if we want to ensure that they have good working conditions and their lives on the Hill are the kinds of lives our employees should lead, then it seems to me the question becomes quite a fundamental one. This is a question of how we as parliamentarians treat our own, those who work for us here and those who are to be seen around us as we carry on the business of Government and the business of debating the national questions with which we are faced. I think also of those who serve us in our offices and those who provide assistance to us from the Library of Parliament. The question of how we are going to treat these persons who work around us and with us is a question which raises the most fundamental concerns about our own integrity and the honesty with which we handle people's lives.

This Parliament, after all, in years past established in the Statutes the Canada Labour Code provisions governing those workers away from the Hill who are under federal regulation. It was significant that the Canada Labour Code made many advances. It attempted to establish a fine standard for employees across the country in federal undertakings. What could one say, however, about the fact that the Canada Labour Code was not the basis for the relations with employers of members of the Public Service? What could one say when the Government of Canada presumed to impose on workers in federally regulated undertakings a high standard and then accepted a much lower standard in the form of the Public Service Staff Relations Act for the Public Service of the