

Government Orders

be able to be bumped by the staff of the ministers. Those declared surplus in this act will move to the top of the priority list for job offers. That is a fair and reasonable thing to do.

I have been disturbed by other parts of the act. Allow me to quote from a letter written by the President of the Treasury Board to the Professional Institute of the Public Service last July. He was writing about the work force adjustment directive which is an umbrella agreement between Treasury Board and the unions that represent indeterminate or regular full time employees of the Government of Canada.

Members opposite should listen very closely to what the President of the Treasury Board wrote on July 22, 1994: "This government has stated in the past and remains committed to the principle that the employment protection provisions in the work force adjustment directive will only be changed through negotiations".

To me this promise does not speak of unilateral action; it speaks of a process of consensus. What is the main purpose of the first 10 clauses of Bill C-76? The main object is to break a promise. This bill unilaterally without negotiation changes the provisions of the directive.

The government tried to negotiate. It took a long time but not all unions would agree to change the directive. Therefore the government went ahead and broke its promise. Why is this little broken promise so important? I will be glad to tell you why this is so important and every public servant in the federal government should be listening right now.

The government made all sorts of promises during the last election campaign. The Ottawa *Citizen* reported a few days ago the contents of a brochure sent out during the campaign under the name of a man who today is the minister for renewal in the public service.

The brochure read: "Public servants, enough is enough. The Conservatives have used public servants as scapegoats and treated them with contempt. I pledge to protect public servants against job loss". He is the minister who is sitting in the House now. That is another wonderful promise from the government, but today that promise lies in shreds along with 45,000 public service jobs.

• (1330)

It is ironic that the Liberals in the last election campaign tried to stir up fear among the public servants about what the Reform Party might do to their job security in the days ahead. Many of them put their trust in the Liberal Party, hoping that nothing would be changed, that the words of the minister would hold true. The Liberals were happy, of course, to promise the moon as long as they could get the public service vote.

The President of the Treasury Board was happy to promise that the workforce adjustment directive would only be changed

through negotiation. It was easy to promise that. If he was not sure he could deliver on that promise, he never should have made it in the first place. All public servants should beware Liberal promises. They have proven today with this bill that their promises are not worth the paper on which they are written.

As the financial situation of the government becomes more and more serious, more and more promises will have to be broken. In just two years the interest alone on the national debt will be \$51 billion. Total program spending will be barely double that, just \$108 billion. Social programs and the public service will be reduced to a shell because the Liberal government feels free to make promises but does not intend to lay the fiscal groundwork in order to be able to keep them.

This bears repeating. The threat to social programs and the threat to our public service does not come from fiscally conservative people such as myself. The threat to the public service and social programs comes from people who will not and do not have a plan to balance the budget and bring the deficit to zero. That is where the threat comes from and the budget does not address that.

Further to this concern, I want to say a word about fiscal responsibility. I received an anonymous letter today from a public servant who talks about the air navigation system of the Department of Transport. There are 6,600 employees in this part of the department and the public servant alleges in this letter: "Transport Canada employees expect to be terminated with full severance and cash out packages and immediately be offered the same jobs in a new commercialized air navigation services organization with no interruption. Some retiring people can be expected to be hired back on contract as they are now". That would be a real travesty.

We need assurances from the minister that this will not happen, that it will not be allowed to happen. The public servant who wrote this letter suggests that this boondoggle could cost the taxpayer in excess of \$200 million.

We in the Reform Party of Canada will watch the Liberals. We will hold their feet to the fire to make sure that they are not going to merely transfer from the public service an equally expensive and maybe even a more expensive contracted service in another sector, just for the sake of saying they met a bottom line on the job count. That is something that must be watched because the key is fiscal responsibility and economic savings to the government. If it cannot show that, if it cannot prove that, then it should not be axing the jobs to begin with.

With tongue firmly in cheek, I would suggest perhaps that the Reform Party is not as sophisticated as the Liberal Party. The Reform Party sticks to the economic, bald faced facts and offers the unvarnished truth. It is not prepared to promise the world to the public service or to anyone else. Reformers are willing to face the situation as it is and be responsible with taxpayers' dollars. All we promise to do is to act immediately to preserve