

servants' relationships with senior department officials, with management people, and even among themselves.

I do not want to get into that because we are serious in suggesting that this bill should be referred to a special committee of the House. This would allow people to come before us and express their views on the whole gamut of subjects.

For example, many people are concerned with contracting out. Should there be less? Should there be more? How should efficiency of contracting out be measured? What is the basis on which members of the Public Service should be promoted? Should it be automatic? Should it be just a question of sitting around long enough to qualify for a promotion? Should merit increases be automatic? There are so many questions that should be put.

I believe that part of our problem in this place is that we suggest that there should be consultation and there should be reference, there should be an opportunity for input. Then we go ahead and tell everybody what should be done.

In a bill of this magnitude, with the kind of impact it will have, even the terminology used, the year 2000, all of that lends itself to supporting our position that the bill should be referred to committee.

There should be sufficient opportunity for Canadians. There is a tremendous concern about whether or not Canadian taxpayers are getting the best possible return on their tax dollar.

Is efficiency a priority, not just part of a system of becoming more efficient, but is it the priority? What does efficiency mean in the Public Service? Does it mean turning around letters of enquiry dealing with income tax or GST or Canada Pension Plan or is it dealing with the problem that is raised in the letter?

How are we going to cope with the tremendous changes in technology? What is going to be the impact of having the technology that will allow people all over Canada to work in the Public Service?

I know that my friends in Ottawa rightfully repeat quite often that there are Public Service personnel throughout the country, but there are more in some regions of the country than in others.

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In Atlantic Canada, for example, we have public servants but they do not get paid the same as public servants in other parts of the country, in some instances because there is a regional pay system.

There are so many questions. They are legitimate questions and they come from all sectors. Surely members of the Public Service have a right to significant input on changes that will directly affect them and their families, their futures, their careers, their rates of pay and their responsibilities.

Why would we wish to proceed with a bill that has really not garnered very much support from any of the important sectors that are involved on a day-to-day basis with the kinds of situations the bill gives rise to, but also in terms of how the public perceives it?

We are going through a recession. We are dealing with the Constitution. Very few Canadians, other than when the strike occurred, on a day-to-day basis think about what the Public Service is doing in this country unless they have had an experience, good or bad, with someone in the Public Service in trying to get some answers or to get some help and avail themselves of the kinds of facilities available through the Public Service.

I want to take just a couple of moments to address an area that is a specific concern of mine. That is, regardless of how this reform comes out I hope it will be after it has been scrutinized by a special committee that provides for a great amount of latitude from the people who come before it to express their point of view. Regardless of how we arrive at the end result, we have to have enhanced accountability in every sense of the word.

• (1100)

Canadians are frustrated with the system. We as members of Parliament are very often the lightning rod for that frustration. People look at us and suggest that we are not able to perform adequately, that we are not efficient and that we are not getting the kinds of programs in place that are required in this country.

As much as that is valid and as much as we must say *mea culpa* and that we take our own responsibilities, I think it goes far beyond that. Many Canadians are questioning the system: the role of the member of Parliament, the role of the Senate certainly, the role of provincial politicians, the role of municipal politicians. All of us are suffering from the cynicism and again, as I