

Motions

photographs, enough of this arrogance—17 photographs in 16 pages—on the part of the Prime Minister.

M. Ricard: He's photogenic!

Mr. Boudria: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member on the far right, the Member for Laval (Mr. Ricard) is telling the House the Prime Minister is photogenic! Well, I am sure at least the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) thinks so, even if nobody else does. He certainly has his picture taken pretty often at taxpayers's expense, at the expense of Canadian voters, the same voters who were promised by the Prime Minister, when he was Leader of the Opposition and even before then, when he said in the book he wrote or claims to have written that the Canadian Government would have to set an example and that the Canadian Government should not waste taxpayers' money.

And the same Prime Minister who was indulging in that kind of abuse today. And the Hon. Member on the far right, the Hon. Member for Laval, did well to bring this to my attention, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank him for doing so.

In any case, since I don't want to take up too much of the time of the House, so as not to upset my good friend, the Hon. Member for Richelieu (Mr. Plamondon), I will conclude my remarks, Mr. Speaker, and I ask, as my good friend and colleague, the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) said with such eloquence, for the unanimous support of Parliament for adopting the Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

• (1300)

[English]

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, this report is a result of deliberations by the Public Accounts Committee which go back through much of this year. I had an opportunity to take part in that committee some time prior to the presentation of the tenth report on April 30 which is before the House at this time.

I agree with my colleagues from the Conservative Party and Liberal Party that this report should be concurred in unanimously. I certainly will ensure that my colleagues in the New Democratic Party will join in concurrence.

This report reflects the very serious concern of the Public Accounts Committee, upon reviewing the staffing actions and the role of the Public Service Commission, as well as upon reviewing the March, 1985 Auditor General's Report with respect to the actions of the Public Service Commission. Other concerns also arose. The delegation of staffing by the Public Service Commission had been almost total. The monitoring of over-staffing activity by departments was minimal as far as the Public Service Commission was concerned.

We were concerned that the departments went to such length to ensure that all the proper procedures were followed in the case of an appeal on staffing to the Commission, that it resulted in a very lengthy and time-consuming process. The report indicates that it took between 130 and 160 days to staff

a position. This is certainly undesirable in administrative terms, but it also means that fellow workers in a particular area have to cover for a vacant position for as much as half a year because of those delays in staffing. This does not lend itself to effective management, nor do I believe it is fair to the employees who are applicants for positions. They are forced to delay for a long time without knowing whether the position for which they applied will be available.

The report also addresses some general problems with the Public Service Commission. I am pleased that the Public Accounts Committee called for specific responses from the Public Service Commission by September 30, 1986. This is a better procedure than simply issuing recommendations or admonishing a department or agency for failure to comply with effective management, failure to be accountable, or failure to use government funds effectively. Increasingly, the Public Accounts Committee is asking the departments or agencies whose work it reviews to report back on how it is cleaning up its act. This is a better procedure than simply leaving those departments or agencies to make the same errors and develop the same problems in the future.

However, I believe the Public Service Commission has been less than vigorous in acting on one of the specific issues cited in this report with respect to workforce adjustment policy. The Public Service Commission will act within the deadline set by the committee.

One of the committee's major concerns with respect to the workforce adjustment policy was the use of the reverse order of merit procedure in determining which public servants will be laid off when a position is terminated for whatever reason. While no one likes cut-backs, unfortunately the Government wants to impose them so it can show some blood on the floor to the people of Canada as its idea of effective management.

For whatever reason cut-backs occur, the Government is not in a position to deal particularly fairly with employees who are affected. As a member from the National Capital Region, a substantial number of employees and groups of employees have come to me because of the unfair treatment they believe they have experienced as a result of the Government's cut-back procedure known as the reverse order of merit.

Let me explain the reverse order of merit. When a department is faced with eliminating a number of jobs it must evaluate the employees carrying out those duties and determine an order of merit for those positions. Let us assume half of the employees are to be laid off. Those on the bottom half of the merit list are dumped and put on the surplus list. They are automatically labelled as being less meritorious, or not very competent, when they look for jobs elsewhere in the Public Service during that year in which they are entitled to do so, rather than being dropped completely from the Government's responsibility.

When someone from within the Public Service applies and is considered for a new position, there is a rather complex and