

*Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act*

President of the Privy Council and the President of the Treasury Board to amend this Bill as soon as possible in a manner consistent with the views and requests of Parliament employees.

I find somewhat surprising, and even a little absurd, that the Minister of Labour (Mr. McKnight) who certainly has a general responsibility toward all Canadian workers, and especially those he meets daily on Parliament Hill has not come out more strongly on the side of Parliament employees. I ask the Minister of Labour to wake up, read this Bill, read the representations made by representatives of the Public Service Alliance, and especially those of Parliament employees, and then exert pressures on his colleagues to have Bill C-45 properly amended.

But the best thing that we could do at this time, Mr. Speaker, would be to accept the motion moved by my colleague the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps), that this Bill be not now read a second time but that it be read one month hence, in order to reach an agreement negotiated in good faith between the employer and employees on Parliament Hill. I am sure that if we took advantage of that month to sit down, discuss frankly and reach the necessary compromise, we would not have to debate this Bill in the House. Following an agreement between the employer and employees on the Hill, the Government could introduce a Bill that would receive unanimous approval. We in the Liberal Party would be the first to support the Government if it could reach such an agreement after consultation and frank negotiations with employee representatives.

I am therefore asking the House to postpone this debate for one month to give the President of the Privy Council and the President of the Treasury Board a chance to notify the employer forthwith, ask him to sit down with the representatives of our employees and determine once and for all the details of the legal framework that will govern them in the future.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Questions and comments. The Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps).

**Ms. Copps:** Mr. Speaker, since the Hon. Member for Papineau, as a former Labour Minister, has some experience in this area, I would like him to explain to the House what the result would be. Since the CLRB granted the employees the right to organize under the Labour Code, and that decision was reversed today by the court, whose decision may be appealed, could a Minister really proceed with a Bill like Bill C-45, considering the quantity of information released today?

**Mr. Ouellet:** Of course, I don't know what the decision of the Public Service Alliance will be following that decision. Surely that ruling on the appeal by the Federal Court may lead to an appeal to the Supreme Court. However, what I have tried to say in my argument today is that we should not be using courts to settle the matter, this being the first major

concession the employer is willing to grant to the staff on Parliament Hill.

For the first time, the employer, through the Government, has tabled a Bill that recognizes not only the right of association but also the right to bargain for new collective agreement, a collective agreement that will provide for essential safeguards and protection.

Now, what I am saying is this: If that is what it is all about, let us do it in good faith on both parts, let us sit down at a table and negotiate an appropriate framework. However, the decision of the Appeal Division of the Federal Court only highlights part of the problem. And in my opinion the legal process at this time is in a way an adversary, not a consultation process. If the parties feel that they have to appeal to courts to have their rights recognized, there has to be a lack of communication and understanding somewhere between the parties.

I believe that instead of carrying on with this process of court settlements, it would be a lot better on the part of the employer to say: "Well, we won our case with the Appeal Division of the Federal Court, but that does not mean that our position is strictly adamant". In my view, the very fact that the employer has won should encourage him to be more magnanimous, more flexible, more generous with Parliament Hill workers, to sit down with them and agree to the appropriate trade-offs in Bill C-45, so that everyone can be happy. Then the employer and all the workers of Parliament Hill as well as Government and Opposition Members could unanimously pass an amended bill that would satisfy parties involved.

[English]

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Mr. Speaker, sometimes one wonders if this is an Alice in Wonderland situation when one hears my friends to my right. I was here from 1972 to 1980. I know that our Party kept making representations to the Hon. Member for Papineau (Mr. Ouellet) and his Government, asking and demanding that workers on the Hill ought to have the right to collective bargaining.

**Mr. Epp (Provencher):** Where were you yesterday when we needed you?

**Mr. Rodriguez:** I have to do the job for the Tories. They were good as the Opposition but now that they are the Government, they do not know what to do. They are forgetting their opposition roots. The Government must never forget its roots. It began in opposition. The Conservatives were born in opposition and born to be in opposition. I think they have forgotten that.

**Mr. McMillan:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Would the Hon. Member tell the House whether the New Democratic Party has ever been in Government federally?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I must consider that not to be a point of order.