

Government Orders

Two months ago when we were dealing with the Bank Act in this House of Commons, someone on the floor of the House, I believe it was a Liberal amendment, put forward an idea.

• (1050)

It put forward the idea that if a consumer did not feel that he or she was being treated fairly by a banker, a complaint could be made to the Superintendent of Financial Institutions.

If the complaint was found to be worthy, to be true, then that complaint would go on the annual report of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions to the House of Commons. This was an accountability measure to make sure that banks were not just treating people within their own power and within their own bureaucracy.

I would like to suggest to the hon. member that as we are refining this bill, maybe there could be some kind of an appeal mechanism not unlike the one we have put into the Bank Act.

For example, suppose I were to apply for a job and I felt I had the competence to get that job. But I did not get the job plainly because of bureaucratic patronage. Obviously I would have substantive reasons to believe that.

Would it not be a good thing to make sure that there were some kind of an appeal court for public servants if they felt the reason they did not get a job was because of bureaucratic patronage?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Gibeau: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question and for this opportunity to provide him with an answer I am sure he will be pleased to hear because it is yes, such a mechanism is indeed provided for.

Some of the proposed amendments to the Public Service Employment Act would offer a measure of protection against abuse, for instance an independent review by a third party. Thus, people who feel they have been wronged would have access to a mechanism which is mentioned in writing, defined and explained in the proposals that have been put forward.

This in no way limits the responsibility and accountability of the employer and the managers. The checks and balances system is still being applied. The spirit in

which this legislation was introduced by government is to let it be known that our civil servants, our managers are competent. Generally speaking, in principle, our people are competent and there is no abuse. However, if someone feels there is abuse, mechanisms are provided to deal with this.

[*English*]

Mr. Douglas Young (Acadie—Bathurst): Mr. Speaker, I want to address very briefly this piece of legislation that, in my view, has tremendous implications for how the services of the Government of Canada are delivered and how people interact with their government through the bureaucracy.

Let me say at the very outset, Mr. Speaker, that I totally agree that this bill should be referred to committee, as has been proposed by many speakers to your left.

We believe that the implications, the ramifications of this bill, are such that we understand that many people will want to have some input, including of course people in the Public Service, but most of all I believe people outside of the Public Service.

I have just come from the Standing Committee on Public Accounts where the Government of Canada explains to various departments how more than \$100 billion is spent.

The biggest problem that we face in public accounts is the complexity of the material provided to us that is allegedly designed to provide information not only to members of the House of Commons and to Parliament generally, but also to the people of Canada.

If we are going to seriously consider changing the way in which the federal Public Service functions in terms of, for example, accountability, giving more flexibility to managers, being able to deal with issues at various levels, being able to provide more direct service to taxpayers and to clients of various departments, then we are going to have to at the same time address how we are able to account to the people of Canada for the money that is spent. I think we are a long way from that and that is why a special committee of Parliament should be struck to review this entire concept. It would be very simple.

I know a number of colleagues have already addressed the question of morale in the Public Service. We are in a post-strike situation where there are still many, many problems to be resolved within the Public Service, public