

*Government Orders*

approaches to developing the most important resource any nation has the talent and the ability of its people. The people resource becomes even more important as we head toward an economy where 70 per cent of the economic activity will not be in resource development and manufacturing but in services and information. Who should know better than government the ethic of service and the importance of information to the setting of future direction.

[Translation]

The workplace faces many challenges. Technological change requires us to consider human resources in a new light and realize that young people will no longer be schooled and trained in the expectation that for the rest of their lives, they will have a relatively stable occupation. It is essential to provide for on-going renewal of workers' skills if we are to avoid constant disruption of people's personal and professional lives.

It will be extremely important to have a good idea of employees' abilities so as to maximize their development. We must get rid of our prejudices about who is the best equipped to exercise a given profession and about the value of work which, for many years, was evaluated according to the social groups that were traditionally responsible for certain tasks.

[English]

If justice and fairness and equity were not compelling enough reasons, making the best possible use of every bit of talent this nation possesses requires that old biases and barriers be stripped away. The government must ensure that minorities, women, disabled persons and aboriginal peoples are given an equal opportunity at employment and advancement in the Public Service.

The workplace of the future will require flexibility to change. Old ideas about hierarchy and top-down management, every old concept about organizations and reporting structures will need to be re-examined. The pace of change will be too fast to rely on the old models of reorganizing massive structures to respond to new needs. Working relationships will need to become more important than reporting relationships, or the structures in which they operate.

[Translation]

On big issues like the environment, the old procedure of determining who is responsible and who is liable and who must make decisions will just not work. New relationships will have to be established in a spirit of partnership between decision-makers, managers and workers. The government must show the way in this regard.

[English]

I have examined the milieu of the Public Service and I have been struck by the lack of any cohesiveness in setting policy and direction for the most important tool of government. The Public Service is responsible for advising on policy, for delivering services and for managing the fiscal and physical resources of the people of Canada. I am amazed that there is no committee of this House that routinely calls to account the Treasury Board, the Privy Council Office and the Public Service Commission for their management of a work force of 250,000 people, 10 per cent of the national expenditures.

[Translation]

It is distressing to note that the right-wing policy of contracting out, privatizing and dismantling government institutions, the means by which public policy is carried out, is being applied without any consideration of its effects on the professionalism and dedication of the Public Service, on the quality of public services, on the protection of public health and safety and on the costs of government.

[English]

People are being hurt in the process. Careers are being interrupted in mid-stream. Staffs have been downsized to the point of exhaustion, families are being devastated to the point of instability and uncertainty about their future. Whole communities are being decimated. Morale is down, people are stagnating in their careers, the Public Service is aging, its international reputation for excellence is being lost. Yet, there is no mechanism for holding the government accountable for its actions.

That is the context in which I examine the bill. Will it improve accountability for the functioning of the Public Service? Will it better prepare the Public Service to meet the challenges of the future with creativity, competence and optimism? Will it reinforce or damage the commitment of the Public Service to the future of the nation