

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

does this mean? It means simply that non-red-circled civil servants are deprived of the opportunity of promotion until red-circled employees are satisfied.

In other words, there is the rankest discrimination against all civil servants, and I emphasize "all civil servants." Non-red-circled employees are held back and refused promotion for reasons extraneous to their own merit. In my opinion this is a direct breach of the Civil Service Act by those very persons who are sworn to uphold it.

What can be done, now that the cabinet and the Civil Service Commission have created this unholy mess? The only realistic answer, I submit, is to divorce the individual incumbent from the red-circled position. Because the red-circling is not his fault, the present incumbent should enjoy all the increases and other benefits which automatically would have been his if the position had not been red-circled. When the position is next filled, its new and lesser status would become effective.

In effect this is a deferment of red-circling and no individual would suffer thereby. The present incumbent keeps his old status and all its ordinary perquisites so long as he holds the position. The new status of the position would become effective when it is next filled, and filled by ordinary promotional competition, with the competitors knowing all the facts.

So, sir, in moderate but the firmest possible words I want to submit to the government that corrective action cannot be deferred. Immediate relief should be given, and by immediate I mean in this month of October. Otherwise permanent harm will be done to a very great public service.

Classification review was started as a prerequisite to collective bargaining. If the injustices are not rectified at once, belief in collective bargaining will be destroyed generally among civil servants, and at the same time morale in the public service, already endangered by the government's precipitate action in imposing bilingualism, will suffer a blow from which it will take years to recover.

So, I appeal to the government tonight for action now, this very week, and I say to it that the time for stalling, for evasion of governmental responsibility, is long past. I ask the minister, the cabinet and the commission to act.

**Mr. J. E. Walker (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, the government has long been concerned with the problem of classification in the civil service, and as a prelude to the introduction of collective bargaining the Civil Service Commission, through its bureau of classification revision, undertook to bring order into the chaos that existed.

The Civil Service Commission has done an outstanding job in constant consultation with the staff associations in an effort to reduce the incidence of protective red-circling to a minimum. When the problem first appeared in July of this year the staff associations agreed to hold a series of weekly meetings with the Civil Service Commission in order to reduce as much as possible the problem associated with pay conversions.

The number originally red circled—and incidentally I dislike that term—totalled 15,800 in the administrative support and administrative categories. Through action on the part of the government, this had been reduced by October to approximately 4,500 positions. Such schemes as vacancy preference were instituted to resolve some of the problems being encountered. It was also agreed that the commission would re-examine the whole situation if red circling had not been completely eliminated by December 31. With the announcement of the conversion for the administrative and foreign service categories in September, the incidence of persons whose present pay must be protected was once more highlighted by the staff associations. At that time the staff side conference requested the commission to re-open consultations, in order to resolve the issues involved, at an earlier time.

These consultations have been taking place and I understand that certain recommendations are now in the hands of the staff at Treasury Board for analysis. The staff proposes to have the usual consultations with the staff associations, and I suggest to my hon. friend that the normal process of consultation be allowed to take place. The government is deeply concerned with the effect that the conversion program is having on employee morale in the public service, and the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Bell) can rest assured that we will do everything possible to bring the matter to a mutually satisfactory conclusion.

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 10.30 p.m.