

*Government Orders*

the situation in the Great Lakes, and on the situations on the Atlantic coast and on the Pacific coast.

Members of the government were very clear that their intention was to have this committee meet for a matter of a few hours and to have its business over and done with. They would not give permission for the Minister of Veterans Affairs to come before the committee and provide us with accurate information about what was really going on in the Veterans Affairs homes and what was really going on in National Defence hospitals.

The government members of the legislative committee wanted to make sure that a request by the Liberal opposition to hear from the chairman of the Public Service Staff Relations Board was not acceded to. I challenge members of the committee to say that they felt that they were fully aware of the provisions of the Public Service Staff Relations Act and fully aware of labour law and the positions that the courts had taken on various matters relating to collective bargaining within the Public Service.

I certainly did not feel that I was and my colleague from Dartmouth certainly did not feel that he was. We both felt that we needed the counsel of the Public Service Staff Relations Board, the impartial advice of the chairman of that board, to advise us as to the implications of certain aspects of this act. This very clearly interferes with the normal collective bargaining process. This very clearly sets in place a process that abrogates some of the normal rights to negotiate which workers enjoy within the Public Service of Canada.

Government members of the committee had a majority and indicated every intention of using that majority with a heavy hand to ensure that the committee did not have a careful and close look at that bill. They had every intention of ensuring that this bill was reported back on Monday morning to the House, regardless of whether or not the committee had completed its deliberations.

The legislative committee, on Sunday afternoon and Sunday evening, did hear from the Public Service Alliance of Canada, the union representing the workers in both these strikes. The Public Service Alliance of Canada put before the legislative committee certain amendments that it felt did not make this a good bill, did not make it a palatable bill and did not make it a bill that it wanted to see adopted or passed by this House. But it did put before the legislative committee some reasonable

amendments that would at least represent a token acknowledgement of the normal process of collective bargaining.

Government members of the legislative committee, with their majority, chose not to consider in detail those recommendations of the union representing 3,600 workers. They simply said: "We have not got time for this. We have not got time to seek the advice of people within the departments, people from the justice department. We have absolutely no way of knowing if these are reasonable amendments or acceptable amendments or not".

They said that in general the amendments did not seem to be a problem. They were not going to give this committee established by this House of Commons the time to consider each of these amendments and to get the advice of professional Public Service employees, advice that would allow us to word the amendments properly, to determine whether in fact they were acceptable to the government.

• (1520 )

They were not even prepared to allow that process to take place because they were so anxious to ram through this bill. They were intent on bringing it forward and reporting back to the House on Monday.

I think that is a real abandonment of duty when there are amendments before a legislative committee. The responsibility of a legislative committee is specifically to review in detail the provisions of a bill and to recommend back to the House what if any changes should be made to that bill. It is the obligation of that committee, whether government members or members from this side of the House, to review every clause to assure themselves that that clause is proper, that it accomplishes what it is intended to accomplish, and that it does not put in place something which in fact is going to defeat an otherwise worth-while objective of the legislation.

However, government members of the committee chose not to do that. They quite blatantly said that they did not want to take the time to look at these proposed amendments. They did not even want to consider the representations of the alliance that represents over 160,000 Public Service employees; that is over half the people who work for the Government of Canada. They did not think they had anything worth while to say to us