

which could negotiate with the government. It would be more logical.

But any way, it is an improvement since it involves the establishment of a board for collective bargaining. It is surely an improvement on what we had in the past. We are most happy with this small improvement but we would wish that all employees of the civil service belong to a completely independent union, since they are claimed to be free men. Such is the claim, but I do not at all believe it. Nevertheless, it would be a small step forward concerning the freedom of the employee.

• (5:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Leboe: Mr. Chairman, I should like to comment very briefly on the resolution before us in connection with bargaining rights for public servants. For a number of reasons we in this group have been in favour of bargaining rights for public servants. At this stage in the debate it is difficult to speak without repeating some of the things which have already been said but I will try to avoid covering the same ground twice.

First, I would like to say there is a certain degree of myth attached to the proposition of public servants having the right to bargain but on the other hand there is a distinct reality that it can be very valuable not only to the general public service but also to the government itself. This sounds like a contradiction, but what I mean is that over the years we have been in a position where a certain amount of bargaining has been going on all the time, although not in the same sense as it will be once official bargaining machinery such as is proposed is set up.

This will not provide a utopia, as many public servants may think, because the responsibilities of the public service are going to be manifest to them in much greater degree than in the past. The psychological effect, however, will be to produce a peace of mind for public servants in having an organization that will do the right thing for them with respect to working conditions, wages and so on.

However, they will come to realize more than ever that the executive officers of their organization will have to be watched, and the officers will have to keep in close contact with the rank and file membership of the public service lest at any time they speak for themselves and not for the ordinary membership. This may even bring about a situation

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in the future where limitations will be put on the length of time an officer may hold office. This, I believe, will become paramount in the actual effectiveness of negotiations.

We shall also discover that some of the members of the public service will be better off as a result of collective bargaining but others will not be as well off as at present because in the process of elimination of categories and by reason of the grinding mill of negotiations some public servants will be removed from their present categories.

When the bill is introduced we shall have to spend a considerable amount of time analysing it in order to make certain that it will be a properly working act of parliament right from the beginning. I think this analysis will have to take place in committee, and I am hopeful that there will be free expression of opinion in order that parliament can offer its best with respect to the bargaining position of public servants.

[Translation]

Mr. Allard: Mr. Chairman, should I call it six o'clock?

Mr. Haidasz: No, continue.

Mr. Gauthier: Continue.

Mr. Allard: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to—

The Deputy Chairman (Mr. Rinfret): Order. I must advise the hon. member for Sherbrooke that the time allotted for the study of private members' business has been postponed to a later date. He may therefore continue his remarks with regard to the resolution now before the house.

Mr. Allard: It is very kind of you, Mr. Chairman, to point out that I now have the floor. However, before I go any further, allow me to say that I disagree with the hon. member for Roberval (Mr. Gauthier) concerning the resolutions put before this house.

By virtue of my political status here in the house I must, however, differ somewhat today from the opinion he has expressed; I feel that the resolution stage has its importance for it allows the government to give parliament an outline of the bill to follow and the occasion to find out what the various political parties and members think of the matter to be submitted to them in greater detail.

Naturally, much time can be wasted in the house, and we have seen it happen from time to time. The same applies to the committees. When the committee is formed, we sincerely hope it will proceed without delay and not