

Government Orders

When you have the very difficult task of evaluating job categories and job content, weighing and grading, and everything that is involved in any sophisticated process of evaluation of job categories and classifications, it is the height of lunacy not to attempt to carry that through on a jointly negotiated and administered basis.

Anyone who knows anything about anything in the labour force must realize that what causes problems in workers' minds is not so much how much they get, but how much they get for their labours in relation to what somebody working alongside them gets. The pecking order is what is important when it comes to people's feelings in industry, and it does not matter whether it is the private sector or the public sector. This government is absolutely nuts if it does not realize that and give up on any process that has to be as complex as this one in trying to do it unilaterally. It simply will not work and it will create one headache and one storm after another.

Some of the employees want to make staffing classification and deployment of staff bargainable. They want an adjudication process to hear grievances on the above and they want an end to contracting out of work.

Finally, in terms of the contracting out issue, in the forest industry of British Columbia we do not have major strikes very often. The two we have had in the last 10 years have been of two and four months' duration. It is interesting to note that both of them were over this exact issue of contracting out.

If the federal government wants a fight on its hands, a total breakdown in the efficient operation of the Public Service and ill will on the part of the population and its own employees, there is nothing better designed to provoke that kind of confrontation and breakdown than to insist on contracting out through some philosophy of sheer doctrine and sheer dogma.

The most dangerous kind of politician is the one who believes his own b.s., if you will pardon the expression. I for one am very afraid that is the kind of government we have. That is why it is dangerous and why this bill has to go. That is why this government has to go.

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, as the representative to this House of a great number of public servants in Nepean, I am glad to add my support to the

motion that Bill C-26, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act and other acts in relation to the Public Service of Canada, be not now read the second time but be read a second time this day six months hence.

Nobody in this House will question the need for reform of the federal Public Service, and I think the minister has just said that. At present, Canada's Public Service operates according to legislation developed in the 1960s. Since that time, the business environment has changed substantially. Principles that were taken for granted 25 years ago no longer apply today. New words have replaced the old. Privatization and globalization, unheard of in the 1960s, are now on everyone's lips.

Certainly our Public Service needs a thorough overhaul to help Canada meet the needs of a new century.

Bill C-26, as it now reads, is not the answer. As the Liberal critic for human rights, I cannot help but notice how severely Bill C-26 treads on the basic employee rights that most people across Canada have come to expect in this day and age, the last decade of the 20th century.

Over five years ago, in 1986, this House implemented the Employment Equity Act. This legislation was enacted to ensure that no individual would be denied employment opportunities and benefits for reasons unrelated to ability.

In enacting employment equity legislation, the federal government realized that discrimination on the basis of sex, colour or religion would not stop unless laws were implemented to ensure that merit was the main guiding principle for hiring and advancement.

• (1600)

The government felt so strongly about this that by law it became a watch-dog to ensure that employment equity programs were put in place in all federally regulated businesses.

It is too bad this government sees no need to apply this basic right to its own hiring and advancement processes. There is an employment equity clause in Bill C-26, but it is so vague and weak that it is meaningless.