

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 10, 1990

The House met at 1 p.m.

Prayers

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS (BILLS)

[English]

PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYMENT ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Thursday, November 8, consideration of the motion of Mr. Young (Beaches—Woodbine) that Bill C-225, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act (staff of members of the House of Commons), be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee.

And on the amendment of Mr. Funk:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That" and substituting the following therefor:

"Bill C-225, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act (staff of members of the House of Commons), be not now read a second time but that the Order be discharged, the bill withdrawn and the subject-matter referred to the Standing Committee on Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Government Operations."

Mr. Derek Lee (Scarborough—Rouge River): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to speak to the House today on this item of Private Members' Business, a bill put forward by the hon. member for Beaches—Woodbine in relation to the Public Service Employment Act.

The thrust of the bill is one which most people would be content with, that is, it attempts to provide some degree of security of employment for individuals who are employed or become employed with members of Parliament and it provides a mechanism whereby, under certain conditions, employees in the year after they work for members of Parliament, can find their way into Public Service employment.

It is worth pointing out that other employees of members, who happen to be ministers in the government or the Leader of the Opposition, now, under the Public Service Employment Act, can be hired and taken into the Public Service, with priority over others, upon their termination.

• (1310)

The difficulty, and it is a significant difficulty, that I and my colleagues have with this bill is that it sets up a very obvious distinction between employees of members of Parliament, who are themselves competent, and everyone else in the country who would be, who wants to be or who wishes to apply for a position in the Public Service.

What the bill actually does is to wedge or shoehorn into the Public Service those individuals who for whatever reason find themselves unemployed, including because of their member with whom they are employed not being re-elected. It shoehorns them or wedges them into the Public Service.

We in Canada take great pride in our Public Service. We have a very professional, competent Public Service right across this country which prides itself on being non-political, very specialized and dedicated. The stream of new recruits into the Public Service stays the healthiest if that stream of new blood comes from the public at large.

What this bill does is take a competent group of individuals, the staff people of members of Parliament, and provides them with a privilege to continue on in the employment of the Public Service.

We have three conditions stated under which that could occur. The three conditions are that the staff member has worked with a member of Parliament for three years, that he or she qualified while working with him or her to be a public servant and finally, that he or she enter the Public Service within a year after the termination of employment.

We do not have a problem with individuals who are a part of the Public Service who leave it to work with a member of Parliament or a minister's office and to take a