

The judge said: "I would be defeating the whole purpose of the Public Service Employment Act, which is to ensure that appointments to the Public Service are made on the basis of merit".

The government is deviating substantially from the merit principle once again.

Members of the Public Service entered it to carry out a career in a position in which they could contribute to their country. This legislation leaves them little choice in terms of the direction in which they can move as they follow their career. For many it prohibits career development.

Before closing I want to state that I, and I think the members on this side of the House, continue to support the clauses within the bill that continue to contribute to the strengthening of the Public Service and its ability to serve the public, and improve labour relations.

We on this side of the House continue to oppose clauses of the bill that undermine the merit principle without adequate safeguards, that destabilize the Public Service, that discourage the hiring and retention of highly qualified individuals, and that reduce accountability.

We on this side of the House also propose further substantive amendments to this bill at the report stage, which is what my colleague from Ottawa West has certainly done.

In closing, the merit principle has always guaranteed that the best can move up the ladder. This legislation literally puts an end to that. I cannot support a bill that embraces mediocrity. Obviously this government can.

**Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn):** Madam Speaker, again it gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak on Bill C-26, the amendments to the relationships which the government is going to have, for the most part unfortunately, with its employees.

The merit principle has been the cornerstone of what has undoubtedly been a magnificent civil service in this country and one that has certainly been exemplary in relation to other civil services around the world.

### *Government Orders*

This morning my colleague from Mission—Coquitlam asked what the government could possibly say in relation to the changes it was proposing in another context. To put it in the context of this and the whole bill itself I can just imagine the government standing up and saying: "We have the best civil service in the world. We are going to have the best civil service in the world". They have already said this is going to bring Canada's civil service in line with the 21st century.

As has been pointed out, that is certainly not the case. This is another management fad. Many management fads in the past have usually proven after a short period of time to be fallacious, to be ineffective, inefficient, and certainly unable to accomplish what the perpetrators of it wanted it to accomplish. I guess "perpetrators" is the best word. Then it is only to be supplanted by some other form of management fad. One shudders to think what the next round of changes to this particular aspect of our Canadian society may bring forth.

• (1650)

It was pointed out previously in relation to the whole concept of Bill C-26 that John Edwards, who heads the PS 2000 exercise, when asked in private what effect it would have, replied essentially that it would not have any effect at all because it does give the managers the authority to appoint and to bypass the system, whether it refers to sexual harassment or to the merit principle, a fair system of promotion within the civil service.

I refer to that incident again because it epitomizes, it underscores, it highlights the government's philosophy and the government's purpose in what it is doing in bringing forth these changes, a management fad which will disappear and prove to be ineffective. It will also show itself to be disastrous as far as the people are concerned within the civil service because it will show itself to be a betrayal of them by their employer.

This is not the only incident that makes reference to these changes. Hugh Winsor in *The Globe and Mail* on May 23 said that this clause opens a loophole that will give civil service managers a major new opportunity to play favourites and dispense their own form of political patronage.