

• (1150)

Bill C-45 does address some of the deficiencies that exist, but it does not establish a framework which would put the employees on the Hill on the same footing as other workers in Canada. The Bill establishes a new framework for the employees on the Hill but does not give them the rights which they should have as employees of the Government. Why should the employees on the Hill be treated differently from other people who work for the Government of Canada? The employees have a right to question these differences. We as their technical employers have a responsibility to make sure that those rights are at least equal to the rights of other employees of the Government of Canada.

In the 10 minutes we are allotted today it is impossible to pinpoint all of the shortcomings of the Bill. I would like to bring to the attention of the House those particular shortcomings in the Bill which will allow to continue the things that have caused the most dissatisfaction in the past.

First, the Bill does not cover MPs' staff, Leaders' staff and Party research staff. These employees work for us in a much more intimate way than do the custodians and the cafeteria staff. They have the same kind of problems as the other Hill employees and, therefore, they should have the right to be included under this Bill which establishes only minimal rights. They are excluded entirely and will be in the same position after the Bill is passed as all employees are at present. They will not have any basic rights.

Second, the Bill does not provide for negotiation of classification issues and things like job descriptions, assignments of pay levels and changes in duties. If this Bill passes as it presently reads, the present system of classification will remain unchanged. If we were to look back at the history of Parliament, we would probably find that this particular problem has been the cause of most occurrences of employee dissatisfaction. Many employees do not have job descriptions at all, and many find their job descriptions out of date or having little bearing on the work they actually perform. There is a particular need to establish job descriptions so that people know what they are doing, what they are being paid for and whether or not they are being paid for it at the right pay level. This Bill does not provide for negotiation of that matter.

Third, there is a clause in the Bill which can only be called a union-busting clause. That clause eliminates the recognition of any attempt made by employees to establish a union. It does not allow the applications for certification that have already been made to be recognized.

I could go on. The Bill removes the right to strike. It does not provide for the arbitration of awards, appraisals, promotions, demotions, transfers, layoffs and releases. Disallowing those things takes away from the rights of the people who should be given the same kind of rights as other workers in Canada. It becomes obvious that the shortcomings in this Bill should be looked at in committee very closely and changes should be made to the Bill so that it more closely resembles the

Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act

kind of Bill the public servants of Canada have a right to expect.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to rise this morning to make a few comments on Bill C-45 in the 10 minutes provided me. Bill C-45 is an Act to provide employees of the House of Commons and the Senate with a framework of representation. A central issue in this debate is that we in the Opposition are not trying to delay or oppose the Bill simply for the sake of opposing it. Once again, we are trying to bring something to the attention of the Government.

Bill C-45 is a piece of legislation that in theory and in principle tries to improve the lot of workers on Parliament Hill, both in the House of Commons and the other place, and to bring the workers up to a standard that is fair and comparable to the standards of workers outside the House of Commons and the Senate. We are trying to bring to the Government's attention the fact that Bill C-45 is simply not good enough. Bill C-45 will not do what Government Members purport it will do.

In its present form, the legislation is being rejected by both the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians. As well, the very people this legislation addresses, the employees on Parliament Hill, have rejected it.

Earlier in debate we moved an amendment to hoist the Bill for an extended period of time so that the Government would have an opportunity to go back to the drawing-board and to begin to take seriously the complaints made against this particular piece of legislation. At that point in second-reading stage, that amendment was not agreed to.

We are saying once again at this point that there are serious frustrations being felt on Parliament Hill with respect to this piece of legislation. The feeling about this legislation is that if we are going to move to enhance the position of and respect for these workers, we should not go halfway or three-quarters of the way, but should go the full distance. Some of these employees feel that if we are not prepared to go the full distance then we should not bother doing anything at all. They feel that the last thing they need is to be used in a parliamentary debate and to be carted out at election time by a government Member who is pretending to be the champion of this particular cause. They are saying that they are not naive or gullible and that they do not wish the Government to proceed on that basis.

If you recall, Mr. Speaker, a very similar argument was presented to us when we were debating Bill C-62, the employment equity Bill. Not only in the House but in committee we were debating a piece of legislation that was attempting to ensure equity in the workplace for four target groups, the visible minorities, the disabled, women and natives. Every target group and every organization within the framework of those four classifications appeared before the committee and at meetings across the country to say that they were not satisfied