

*Public Sector Compensation Restraint Act*

bargain collectively for monetary and non-monetary issues. It would ensure that whatever the result of that bargaining would be, the costs thereof would not exceed 6 per cent in one year or 5 per cent in the other, to give effect to the question of restraint.

It would allow, as the hon. member for York-Sunbury (Mr. Howie) worried about the other day in the House, some flexibility so that there could be some adjustments between lower and higher incomes of people within the Public Service of Canada. But our amendment goes a step further. It says that it is not enough just to make a statement about it, that there ought to be some way in which a dispute could be resolved. It says that of course there should be no strike within the period of two years. Of course there should not be. I do not think Canadians would tolerate it; they certainly would not like it. I think a large part of the public service would not like it either. There must be some way in which disputes can be resolved, so it provides a system of compulsory arbitration to settle within the cap of 6 and 5 per cent and to allow that flexibility.

It is important that the House, in the course of its deliberations, look carefully at the amendment. It will guarantee where essential—because everyone talks about essential services—that the services carry on and not be stopped by frustrations which build up from time to time in legitimate labour-management relations. It will guarantee, even in areas which are considered by some to be non-essential, that disputes will be settled. I believe it is important that disputes be settled.

The most striking testimony which the committee heard was that of Dr. Carl Beigie of the C.D. Howe Institute. He arrested members of the committee, not only by painting the depths of the problems faced by the country, but also in terms of their attitude toward the bill, by the faith and conviction which he had in the strength of the country and its people. He did not make any excuse for bad government, but he said that in a country which has suffered under bad leadership something had to be done. He believed that there was sufficient strength in the Canadian people that they were prepared to rally around such an attempt.

He also said something that was important from the point of view of the people who are subject to Bill C-124. He said that it was unnecessary for the government to do away with collective bargaining. Collective bargaining just does not mean that an employee make a request of an employer, and that the employer can decide whether or not the request will be granted or whether the request will even be entertained. Collective bargaining means a discussion in good faith, hopefully leading to resolution. In the context of our amendment, it also means that in the event there is no absolute resolution—and recognizing the necessity the 6 per cent and 5 per cent, which for the purposes of this bill we are not debating—there can be some resolution of the difficulties.

I urge upon my colleagues in the House that in the long term, if the program works—and God knows everyone hopes it will work—it will result in a much better atmosphere and will not leave a residue of resentment behind it. This program not

only covers, public servants under the authority and jurisdiction of the President of the Treasury Board, but it covers employees of Crown corporations and employees of private companies for the first time. That is a venture-out which none of us want to have go awry. All of us want to have available the ways to resolve difficulties.

It is important not just to make a statement that collective bargaining is a good thing, but for the House to demonstrate by the way it handles the debate and votes on the amendment that collective bargaining is a good thing, and that appropriate settlement of disputes can take place under this bill. The amendment that we have put forward in the best of faith, I believe, is one way that can be accomplished with the compulsory arbitration aspect with respect to any disputes.

● (1440)

I think I have placed the position of our party fairly and squarely before the House. There is going to be further debate on many of these amendments. The position of the party is that we must begin the process of restraint. We hope others will follow the lead that is going to be taken by the public service. The public service is unhappy that its members are in the vanguard; they are prepared to accept that they are in the vanguard, but they want to make sure that some others come along too. The government has a duty to those they ask to lead to ensure that others do come along too.

As Dr. Beigie said in the course of his testimony, this is not something to save the government; this is not something to save the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau)—God knows he should have gone long ago; this is something to begin the process of saving the country.

That is the approach. We hope it works, but that is the approach this government has chosen and time will tell whether they are successful or not.

In any event, Sir, I ask the government to consider the amendments with respect to collective bargaining and the fairness of the position they have taken with respect to the staff of Members of Parliament and ministerial staff, because I think that is a gross indecency that they have committed.

I want the government to know that we are watching, that Canada is watching, the public service is watching; and looking over their shoulders to make sure that others have followed. Because if they have not, then this program will have failed.

**Mr. Sid Parker (Kootenay East-Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill C-124 and specifically Clauses 2, 4, 5 and 7. I want to start off, if I may, by referring to a letter that I wrote to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) with regard to the budget that the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) was so pleased to announce that British Columbia is bringing in. I would like the people to know the hardships that it has created, so I am going to refer to part of a letter that I wrote on May 31, 1982:

I am writing to express my concern over recent events at one of the hospitals in my constituency. Because of the recent budget in the Province of British