

electorate. It would provide for a term of office which would have nothing to do with the efficiency of the individual.

Mr. Speaker, I do not see many advantages but some serious implications in such a simplification. Firstly, let us deal with the serious implications. What will happen when, all of a sudden, the senior executives, the administrators who make the wheels of the organization turn, all leave at the same time because their term of office has come to an end? The Government is anything but a small business. It is a major system which needs some continuity and stability, and when there is a change of Government, it is the senior public servants who must provide the continuity required for an effective and healthy management of the country's business.

We just have to recall the criticism to be found in the Lambert Report, this famous report on accountability and financial management, to the effect that Deputy Ministers are changed much too frequently, a fact which affects efficiency and is of course reflected on the organization itself. What the Hon. Member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger) is suggesting is not a change in Deputy Ministers with each new Parliament, but a change which would affect all senior public servants, all the heads of the Government organization. This could do serious damage, Mr. Speaker. I find it difficult to believe that such action would make the Canadian Public Service more accountable to the Government and the Canadian public, when all the agencies and services serving the public would be seriously affected during the period of transition at the end of each Parliament.

If we were to implement such a legislation, Mr. Speaker, we would not be more accountable to the voting public, but we would be acting irresponsibly and neglecting the voters. The public would be the first to suffer. These periods of hesitation and uncertainty will only affect the quality of the services provided to the public. In addition, the Hon. Member seems to forget that, at the level of the individuals themselves, whose terms of office would end with each change of government, such a system could and certainly would affect the morale, the motivation, the commitment and the work of these senior public servants, because they would no longer be in a position to guarantee the effectiveness of Government programs and policies. I am not speaking about partisan policies, but about policies and objectives set by the Government in the interests of the Canadian public.

I also believe that this proposal would be a serious hindrance to the career of these senior public servants.

Mr. Speaker, we must not delude ourselves, and I want to point out in passing, that it is because Deputy Ministers were appointed by the Governor-in-Council that the public service has often been accused of political bias. What is now being suggested is that the list of politically-oriented public servants should also include the Assistant Deputy Ministers and all the senior public servants who are responsible for Government management and policies.

Public Service

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this would be going a bit too far. Apparently, Bill C-230 tends to make Canadian public servants more accountable to the Government and the voting public. Mr. Speaker, I find it very difficult to see how these changes could make the Canadian Public Service more accountable. These last few years, I have seen many initiatives taken by this Government to make the Canadian Public Service more accountable. I have supported them as their purpose really was to bring about improvements. Their objectives were valid and practical. I am afraid that the purpose of this Bill might be somewhat fictitious.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about this concept of accountability and ask my colleagues to ponder over it. I ask them to muse over this basic principle with which you are yourself quite familiar, Mr. Speaker, because you sat with me on the Special Committee in 1977 and 1978, when we considered this matter. All these systems tend to be more effective and require greater efficiency on the part of our public servants.

Mr. Speaker, in our parliamentary system in Canada, and this cannot be compared with the American system as the two are quite different, the concept of accountability to the public, the Government and Parliament, within the law, has been the subject of much attention for many years. First, there was the Glassco Commission, then, more recently, the Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability, better known as the Lambert Commission. This was only four or five years ago. We received the report of this Commission in the House in 1979, four years ago. All the Hon. Members will recall that enormous efforts were made by the Government to implement the recommendations contained in this report. The managerial practices have been reviewed and amended to ensure that the highest level of government assumes its responsibilities on all fronts, in terms of operational, fiscal or human resources activities, to mention just a few.

Several reforms were implemented along the lines of the recommendations formulated by the Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability. I should like to deal briefly with the changes proposed by the President of the Treasury Board around 1981, only just two years ago, based on the recommendations of the Lambert Report. According to this document, the government's proposals concerning managerial accountability were divided into seven categories, which I should like to read for the information of Hon. Members.

First, the fiscal plan; second, an orderly distribution of resources based on the fiscal plan; third, the government's accountability to Parliament; fourth, the accountability within the government; fifth, the accountability and effectiveness of financial system management; sixth, the accountability and effectiveness of human resources management; and seventh, a permanent reform strategy.