

Government Orders

Many of the bill's proposed changes flow from the recommendations of the Public Service 2000 task forces and the subsequent report entitled *Public Service 2000, The Renewal of the Public Service of Canada* issued in December 1990. Very glowing terminology—the renewal of the Public Service of Canada.

It is therefore not surprising that Bill C-26 falls considerably short of its objective of reforming the federal Public Service. The PS 2000 exercise was notorious for its lack of meaningful consultation with federal Public Service workers and their bargaining agents. Hence the so-called reform of the Public Service is based almost exclusively on the beliefs, perceptions and objectives of senior government officials.

• (1550)

I have taken the opportunity over the last year, certainly the last few months, of discussing the entire PS 2000 initiative and its so-called consultative processes with a wide cross-section of federal public employees within my own constituency and other areas of British Columbia. The comments I made a few moments ago are based in large part on the comments I received directly from those employees, whether they be bargaining unit employees at the so-called lower levels, whether they are middle management or some of the senior management in that region. I stand by those comments in light of those conversations and in light of listening to a great many people who are among those most directly affected.

The bill sets out the government's agenda for the so-called reform of the Public Service. It follows on the recommendations made in PS 2000 last year. What this bill does, very briefly, is allow the government to continue to contract work out.

The government now spends in excess of \$5 billion on contracting out. There is no accounting for this expenditure and no study of the cost effectiveness of contracting out despite appeals from many quarters to introduce that kind of financial and managerial responsibility and accountability.

For a government that has a budget the size of the annual expenditures of the Government of Canada to refuse to follow some kind of financially responsible policy before embarking on a major so-called reform of all the legislation affecting the delivery of public services

by the federal government and its agencies is the height of irresponsibility.

For a government that claims to be fiscally conservative and financially responsible, it more than makes us wonder about the credibility of its claims.

The bill increases the unilateral discretion of managers in the deployment of staff. It provides mechanisms for increased evolution of managerial responsibility and accountability.

Finally the bill attacks the job security of public sector workers.

Just as important, the bill does not address the serious problem of low morale in the Public Service. It does not take a lot of wisdom to be able to detect in conversations with public employees from one coast to another the fact that there is a serious deterioration of morale in the federal Public Service in the last while. That stems not only from the inadequacies of the so-called reform process that has given rise to this bill, but many of the other policies that simply do not make sense. For instance, the long waiting lists for what used to be services such as UI that were carried forward with some efficiency, nowadays if you get one little hitch you are lucky to get your claim processed within two months.

Offices of members of Parliament from coast to coast, certainly in the province of British Columbia and most certainly in the interior where we have seen some juggling and centralization of some UI functions, have seen that deterioration of the morale not only of workers but the total collapse of confidence among the people being serviced and the ability of this government and its agencies to carry on anything with any modicum of efficiency whatsoever.

The bill does not do anything to modernize the collective bargaining process. The Public Service Alliance for instance will still not be able to bargain the issues of classification and staffing levels.

I have no direct experience as an employee within the Public Service of Canada, but as a long-time employee I do in the forest industry in British Columbia.

We devised a jointly negotiated and administered evaluation program covering some 50,000 people in the western most part of Canada a number of years ago.