

Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act

Mr. Baker: They would soon be booted out of that union. But they do this because they want to. They are under no obligation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments have now terminated. Debate.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, after listening to what was said by the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans), I have to conclude that this House has nothing to learn from the Hon. Member and certainly not from the New Democratic Party.

The Hon. Member's speech reminded me of the time when I was a Member of the Quebec National Assembly, when the Opposition Members, at the time it was the *Parti Québécois*, the great defenders of the unions, would rise and condemn the Government. But as soon as the *Parti Québécois* came to power, they were the people who kept passing repressive legislation and breaking collective agreements. Mr. Speaker, I find that the New Democratic Party has much in common with those *Parti Québécois* Members. When they are in the Opposition, they make a lot of speeches, but as soon as they come to power, they do the exact opposite.

I remember the people in the New Democratic Party when they had the balance of power. And I never heard a Member of the New Democratic Party demand that the then Liberal Government, as a condition for staying in power, allow employees of the House of Commons to organize. As usual, the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. Deans) just gave us one of his marvelous performances that go over so well on the TV screen, while the Hon. Member disappears as soon as he has finished his show.

Mr. Speaker, I would rather get back to Bill C-45. I think all Members of this House should rejoice today because it is a step forward towards union organizing. Not so long ago, Members of all political parties could say and hide behind these words: the Queen does not negotiate with her subjects. All these people used a lot of high-sounding phrases and dragged the Queen into their eloquent speeches to stop employees on Parliament Hill from getting the right to organize and defend their rights and have a collective agreement.

Mr. Speaker, these employees, including messengers and the people who make the transcripts and operate the television cameras and drive our mini-buses, these people, when they work outside normal working hours, have no arrangement for time and a half or double time. They are literally at the mercy of our parliamentarians, and let's face it, we are not easy to get along with. It isn't easy to work for Members because they are busy working for the well-being of their fellow citizens. I am convinced that most Members of Parliament are anxious to respond as efficiently and as quickly as possible to the requests they receive from their constituents, be they about unemployment insurance problems, employment problems, problems related to old age security pensions, every

time Members want to respond quickly so they want answers from the library staff, from messengers, from ministerial office personnel, Members want quick and efficient responses to be able to serve their constituents intelligently.

Mr. Speaker, it stands to reason that because they want to give good service to all Canadians Hon. Members always expect a little more from Parliament Hill employees. Mr. Speaker, it is important and I think it would have been better had most Members agreed to give those people the right to strike after negotiating a collective agreement.

Mr. Speaker, police officers do not have the right to go on strike. There are many places where people do not have the right to strike, but they do go on illegal strikes. Provocation is as bad and as serious as allowing somebody to exercise a right in self-defence, but it makes it possible for both parties to show maturity and negotiate in good faith. Mr. Speaker, we could have allowed that, in adjudication cases, the expenses incurred by the union be paid by the employer. We have to keep in mind that these people are newly unionized, roughly 2,000 of them. There again I think it would have been better for the Government to accept these amendments concerning employee collective bargaining and unionization.

Mr. Speaker, I was listening to the Hon. Member for Hamilton Mountain earlier, and I must say that I have no lesson to learn from him. As I have already mentioned, at the age of 12, I organized a strike of choir boys, and I must say that, contrary to the kind of union work carried out by the New Democratic Party, I had not asked for one cent in union dues since we were getting five cents, and we immediately got 30 cents.

Mr. Speaker, I can show you evidence that I still pay my union dues. I am affiliated with the Quebec Federation of Labour. I am still a member of my union and I have no lesson to receive from any NDP Member. I may not be a trade unionist, but I am a union member. A permanent trade unionist is paid from union dues while a union member relies on his union leader and his boss. He is caught between the two and he is always the one to pay. I think that we have different views of what makes a trade unionist.

I shall now come back to Bill C-45.

As I have already mentioned, it is a step forward in the process to democratize and unionize our system. The example given by Parliament employees will perhaps appease the fears of businessmen who think that unionization is dangerous and harmful. If they have a good employer, the employees will not try to unionize, they will not try to revolt, and if there is negotiation and agreement between the two parties, there will necessarily be harmony, a good plan of work and improved conditions for working men and women.

Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Government never goes as far as it could in what it offers, whether in social programs, as we saw in the case of pension reform, or in collective agreements, as in the case of this Bill, or in the case of security measures at the airports. There had to be a disaster, a strike of