

Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act

Ms. Copps: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Could you let the record show that the Hon. Member for Brampton—Georgetown (Mr. McDermid) objected to the showing of the Armenian genocide stickers in the House.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McDermid: Stuck on the front of the bench here!

Mr. Speaker: Will the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) please do the Chair a favour now and remove—

Mr. Prud'homme: As a favour.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you.

Mr. Prud'homme: I will send it to the Member.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I thank the Hon. Member for Saint-Denis.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. I just wondered when we can expect to have an Opposition Day so we can get to the several important questions we would like to raise in the House. Can the Minister inform us when we can expect it? We have 13 to go with a couple of months left, and I would like to know ahead of time.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): Please!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: This has been a preoccupation of mine since we came back after Easter.

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): You have been lying awake at night, I know.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I have been trying as hard as possible to get a lot of important legislation through. If we get through some of it quickly, then I will give the Opposition all the time it wants on Opposition Days.

Mr. Gauthier: I know that; the last two weeks!

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[Translation]

**PARLIAMENTARY EMPLOYMENT AND STAFF
RELATIONS ACT**

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Thursday, April 17, 1986, consideration of the motion of Mr. Hnatyshyn that Bill C-45, an Act respecting employment and employer and employee relations in the Senate and House of Commons, be read a second time and referred to a legislative committee, and the amendment (Ms. Copps) (p. 833).

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to take part this afternoon in the debate on Bill C-45 to establish a system of labour relations between employer and employees of the Senate and the House of Commons.

This Bill is obviously very important because, for the first time, legislation will recognize a basic right of the workers on Parliament Hill, namely the right to associate and to be represented by the president and officers of their union to defend their interests.

My colleague for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) presented an amendment asking that this Bill not be read now, but in one month from this day. Why do we want this Bill to be read only in one month from now? It is because we want to give an opportunity to the representatives of the employees on Parliament Hill and the employer to agree on provisions which would be acceptable to both parties.

The Bill introduced by the Government does not satisfy the employees of the House of Commons. We have all received a document which clearly states . . . If I can put a hand on it, I have a copy of it which I would like to read very quickly. This document, which was sent to all Members of Parliament and Senators and was signed by Mr. Jacques Audette, says the following:

You will soon be asked to vote on Bill C-45 respecting Parliamentary employment and staff relations. As those most closely affected, the employees of Parliament Hill ask you to consider the serious concerns raised by this Bill.

This letter refers to a number of points of which our employees do not really approve, namely:

The questions which were and still are of greatest concern to us are classification, job descriptions, competitions, promotions, transfers and the fear of being laid off or fired. The answer to these questions has always been left to the sole discretion of management and this has resulted in serious cases of abuse. Many of us are incorrectly classified and often have no job description. Many of us have applied in vain for promotions or transfers, because the rules governing the competitions were arbitrarily changed in the middle of the game.

I am still quoting Mr. Audette, Chairman of that local of the Association of Parliamentary employees.

Reading that document, Mr. Speaker, one realizes that Bill C-45 is not unanimously supported. More than that, it has given rise to a number of major objections on the part of employees.

What seems quite important, and I will quote yet another paragraph from that letter:

Under the Canadian Labour Code, it is possible to resolve problems through collective bargaining. However, Bill C-45 would not allow us to deal efficiently with any of the above matters. By not allowing us to negotiate classification or to refer staffing problems to arbitration, you will be maintaining the *status quo*.

Mr. Audette concludes, and I quote:

And the *status quo* means lower employee morale and sources of problems for all of us.

You know there have been representations made to the courts and that no later than today, the Federal Appeal Court issued its findings in the case of the House of Commons vs the Canadian Labour Relations Board and the Public Service Alliance of Canada.