

savings plans by the federal Government, but I can broaden that answer to say that the free trade agreement does not—

**Ms. Copps:** Fontana has the answer.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** The Member for Hamilton East does not want to listen to an answer to clarify a complete misunderstanding of her Leader on this issue.

**Ms. Copps:** Fontana will give you the answer.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** Her Leader yesterday had not read, had not understood the free trade agreement—

**Mr. Nunziata:** Ask John Crosbie.

**Ms. Copps:** Ask Crosbie.

**Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre):** If he had, he would have known that the free trade agreement does not apply in any way to portfolio investments as set out in Section 1601(2)(b), Section 1609(1) or Section 1602, all of which restrict the free trade agreement. It does not apply in any way to portfolio investments, which is the focus of stock savings plans that have been introduced by the provincial governments in our country.

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## PUBLIC SERVICE

### POLITICAL RIGHTS OF PUBLIC SERVANTS

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. The Prime Minister promised in the last election campaign that he would propose a Bill giving public servants certain political rights. Why did the Government yesterday not keep its promise? Why did it scuttle a very reasonable Bill which was agreed to by all members of a legislative committee of this House? Why did the Prime Minister not keep his commitment to public servants by clarifying the situation, by placing a Bill before this House? What is the Government doing about this? Why did the Prime Minister not keep his promise?

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is keeping his promise. He is prepared to fulfil his promise. The Government is prepared to act on this issue as was indicated in the House yesterday. I know the Hon. Member is very responsible on this particular issue. I think he recognizes very clearly the delicate balance which has to be maintained between political freedom and the importance of maintaining an impartial Public Service. It is within that context that we would want to see a measure proceed.

What was attempted by Members on this side of the House was to clarify some areas of the Private Member's Bill that required clarification. I regret that we were not able to deal with this more fully, but I can assure the Hon. Member of our

commitment to provide the kind of political freedom and justice that was alluded to during the course of the last election campaign, but also bearing in mind—

**Ms. Copps:** Why do not you keep your promise?

**Mr. Mazankowski:**—the decision of the Federal Court of Appeal which has to be taken into consideration as well. I would hope that the Hon. Member would take that into consideration. I can advise him that we will be drafting a Bill and it will be accompanied by a statement which will, hopefully, clarify this issue.

[Translation]

BILL C-273—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Government, letting a few Members do its dirty work, literally strangled a Private Member's Bill that was intended to confirm and specify the political rights of public employees.

Why did the Government table amendments in the House yesterday which had the effect of killing Bill C-273? Why is the Government now hurriedly telling us it will keep its promise, when it failed to table any legislation in the past four years? Backbenchers had to do it instead. Why did the Government not have the courage to stand up and keep its promise to federal public servants?

[English]

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council):** Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member were fair, and I think he is a fair individual and I have a tremendous amount of respect for him, and if he had looked at the amendments and examined them closely—

**Mr. Gauthier:** Sixteen was not allowed.

**Mr. Mazankowski:**—he would have found that most of them were technical in nature and most of them would have made the Bill more workable and would have, I think, achieved the purpose which all of us in this House want to achieve.

**Mr. Gauthier:** I will write you a letter.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** It is really unfortunate the Hon. Member wants to make this a partisan issue.

**Ms. Copps:** False. Always falsehoods.

**Mr. Gauthier:** You made it a partisan issue. You did it.

**Mr. Mazankowski:** I would have hoped that through the cooperation, good will and understanding of all Members of this House, we could have reached a workable compromise which would have maintained that delicate balance which I think we all want to achieve in order to ensure the impartiality of the Public Service is preserved. That is precisely what Members on this side were attempting to do. I would hope that the Hon. Member might reconsider that.