

*Government Orders*

Quite frankly I think that they are too easily used as a scapegoat, as a battering ram.

I know that there are public servants who like to use the MAD treatment, maximum administrative delay, people who would prefer to push paper and slow down the system rather than have the joy of moving it quickly. We all have examples.

I have cited a couple of examples in this House in which bureaucrats have used the system for whatever reasons they have wanted. Quite frankly there have been times when I judged them not to be the best motivated. Because of the few who have not committed themselves to this life as a vocation, we should not judge the majority.

Seventy or eighty per cent of the public servants of the Government of Canada put out. They work hard and I know members on that side of the House know it. We should not get brainwashed by the complaints that we get from the people or the clientele we have about the few who can sometimes drive us absolutely crazy.

I think that sometimes happens. We all get complaints about public servants who lost a veteran's cheque, messed up a postal service, or there was a contract in a particular department that should have been processed three months ago or a cheque to farmers that should have gone out. We all know that, but we should not condemn the whole system because of those bureaucrats who are possessed by the MAD treatment.

I say to public servants, if any are listening to this debate, that there is one thing as a member of Parliament I have learned in the last three years. There is one thing that frustrates me about the Public Service of Canada. Even though I am defending it here today, I will also debate with the Public Service. If there is one thing that the system can improve on, it is the movement and the processing of paper.

Quite often they are possessed by the MAD treatment, and not possessed by pushing paper through that they could have done today. Quite often they push it off to next week.

To the government, let us cut back on the lean, mean, machine approach and let us see if there is some way we can mobilize the federal presence and the will of the 500,000 people of this country to work for us rather than against us.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell my colleague from Broadview—Greenwood that I greatly appreciated his statement in support of federal public servants. It comes from a former businessman who is very knowledgeable about the business world, so I appreciate it tremendously and I thank him.

I would like to ask a question about his statement dealing with morale. I know that he commented on his experience in the private sector and how essential it is to have dedicated people who want to work together. Since 1985, as he knows, federal public servants have been sacrificed on the altar of the budget deficit. The 1985 Wilson budget reduced the number of jobs in the Public Service by 15,000. The Public Service faces budget constraints that you are all aware of, as well as a capping of salary increases. Last year's strike, which literally pitted civil servants against each other, was, in my opinion, unnecessary. In other words, civil servants must now live with a budget freeze that deprives them of funds for training, for the replacement of equipment which is often obsolete, and I agree with them on that, when the workload is increasing, since hiring is frozen. This does not make much sense. As you will recall, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance even dared to brag last year that the size of the Public Service of Canada was the same as in 1973. Mr. Speaker, this is nothing to be proud of, when we know that the population of the country has increased by 20 per cent. It seems to me that the more Canadians there are, the more we should be able to provide adequate services for them. That is a fairly obvious statement.

Mr. Speaker, add to those restrictions the problems caused by the government's bad policies and you will see why morale in the Public Service is zero or below zero. Right now, the morale of public servants is the lowest I have ever seen, and it is a very bad time to undertake a complete reform of the Public Service. This does not seem to me to be a very wise move.

The hon. member mentioned certain contracting-out programs that will, we hear, be increased in the weeks and months to come. This means that we will transfer to managers additional responsibilities to dismiss, suspend and, occasionally, hire people. My question has to do with the accountability mechanisms that are in place. I