

Government Orders

Against all that background, I will say to the hon. member that when back-to-work legislation has been imposed in the past, it has always been imposed by a Liberal government with provision for arbitration to continue the collective bargaining process, not to discontinue it. It is a measure that has been taken reluctantly only because of the public interest.

That is in fact a legitimate role of government. It is one that should be used rarely and with the greatest reluctance. It should be used not to suspend but to allow the continuation of collective bargaining.

Mr. Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, the member looks at the history of her party in this place definitely through rose coloured glasses.

There were omissions of the Liberal Party in power as it herded the employees of the Public Service back to work. I guess the caution to those who watch her speak in the House on behalf of the Liberal Party is certainly beware of the wolf in sheep's clothing. The workers have been roughly handled by that government before. Clearly the promise is that this will not be imposed and then it simply turns around and imposes it. The question of putting people back to work with imposed settlements and without an opportunity to bargain was in many cases the order of the day.

Of course in Ontario, the TTC workers requested a vote on the offer. I think her view of things is certainly somewhat distorted by the rose coloured glasses and the effort to sell to the Public Service a message which really does not reflect the principles of this party with its likely prediction for the future.

That is of course on the GST, the trade agreement and all the other things that those members are preaching these days.

Mrs. Catterall: Mr. Speaker, I do certainly want to reply to that.

We only have to look as far as this evening's news to see how good the NDP is at living by its principles and keeping its promises once in power. We only have to look at that as a classic example of a party that would rather be in opposition because it is so much easier.

I think the positions of the Liberal Party on these issues stand up better to scrutiny than the record of the NDP government in Ontario.

Mr. Raymond Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, I too take pleasure in having an opportunity to add a few comments to the record about the treatment of the Public Service of Canada.

I am concerned about the fact that both the present Conservative government and the previous Liberal government have treated that Public Service very badly. The morale in the Public Service is extremely bad in many areas because of that treatment. I think the dedication and commitment is there, but certainly uncertainty and difficulties have come up.

We can start with pointing out in one area the kind of betrayals that have occurred with the Liberal Party and the absolute classic betrayal of Pierre Elliot Trudeau who during the 1974 election promised Canadians, the workers of the Public Service and all workers that there would be no wage and price controls, that the order of the day would be fair collective bargaining. He did that while campaigning against Robert Stanfield.

• (1605)

To the credit of the Conservative Party, it may not be palatable and certainly Robert Stanfield went to the sword for his sins, but the Conservatives stood up and said exactly what they believed in. The Canadian people responded accordingly, as we do in a democracy. They believed the Liberals. I think by 1975 they clearly regretted that decision.

The government of the day was so extremely unpopular it was forced to go a full five years right to the end of its mandate before it lost to the Clark government. It did so by betraying people I think principally on that six and five issue. You cannot trust Liberals.

The Public Service of Canada has learned that today and it has learned it through the years. The Liberals prior to an election will tell you anything you want to hear. Ultimately when the day draws near, when the election is over, those promises on the election platform are betrayed.

The Liberal Party also began the process of cuts to the Public Service. Prior to making the cuts in the Public Service the Liberal Party adopted a process by which it criticized the Public Service first. The Liberals thought it would be much easier and they could gain public support. This was again during that period from 1974 to 1979 when they began a process of saying the cost of government was too high. They believed Stanfield's lines.