

Fifth, public service employees should provide privately and confidentially politicians with objective advice.

Sixth, public service employees should loyally carry out the political decisions while respecting the philosophy and platform of the political party currently in power without consideration for their own personal opinions.

The practical limits of this theoretical model of a public administration have already been denounced and it appears certain that the reality of the Federal and Provincial Public Services falls short of this ideal. Proposals may therefore be formulated to better correspond to the contemporary reality. However, both in their original or amended forms, the major characteristics of this model are always present. At this time, three questions arise: What would be the impact of Bill C-225, if adopted, on the principles which I have just described? What would be its impact on the perception which Canadian men and women have of their Public Service? And finally, what would be the impact on the morale and promotion opportunities of present Public Service employees?

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to emphasize the need for Public Service neutrality and impartiality to be preserved in any decision we may take. It is necessary for the maintenance of a highly competent Canadian Public Service which is deservedly envied by several countries.

Mr. Speaker, within the context of Public Service 2000 and personal management review carried-out by the Public Service, I suggest that the amendment should be judged on its merits. The Public Service Employment Act is very important and embodies basic principles which should not be disregarded.

• (1840)

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe that the employee who has served faithfully and worked loyally for a Member of the House of Commons for at least three years should receive some priority consideration. I feel this would be a step in the right direction. I recognize, however, that some questions remain which deserve careful consideration.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, all members here readily appreciate the purpose of the bill and could support it. As indicated in the explanatory note, the purpose of the bill is as follows: “—to provide

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equitable treatment to the staff of members of the House of Commons (including the staff of the Speaker of the House of Commons) when their employment is lost—”

The bill would give members' staff the right to priority appointment to any public service job for which they are deemed to be qualified.

Mr. Speaker, it is passing strange that the New Democratic Party would sponsor this kind of legislative measure, for we all remember—and this was quite a recent occurrence—that the NDP is adamantly opposed to preferential treatment being given to members over any other citizen. So why would they now want our staff to be given preferential treatment? I find this quite contradictory, Mr. Speaker.

Anyone who is familiar with the 1990 labour market would know that nowhere can an employee expect foolproof job security. Still any fair-minded Canadian would readily agree that the staff of members should not work under conditions offering little or no chance of promotion. Mr. Speaker, we members of the House know the situation of our staff better than anybody else. We live with them all day long. We are quite aware of their long working hours because they are the same as ours, not to mention the stress they work under as well as the endless series of problems, questions and issues with which they must deal and be familiar.

More than anybody else we know just how unpredictable their workload can be from one day to the next. That does not prevent them from discharging their many responsibilities with outstanding dedication and loyalty. Indeed the public cannot possibly be aware of the support they bring to members and to the House, and their work does not get the recognition it deserves.

Given the importance of their contribution to the country, as much as other Canadians these people should be able to look forward to other employment once their term is complete. To me that seems only normal and fair.

But is that enough to claim that this legislative measure ought to be adopted as is? I for one must confess that Bill C-225 raises a number of serious questions. The first question I asked myself was this: Are the circumstances of our staff such that legislation of this kind is necessary? Second, even if that were the case, does this bill really provide a solution and is it an acceptable one? All members of this House are probably