

*Government Orders*

About a week and a half ago, one of my constituents told me that he would have to sell his truck because he could not pay his rent. He said that he needed a job even if it paid \$3 because the day care centre would not keep his child any more if he was not working. When I asked him why, he told me that he was a casual with the federal government and as part of his agreement after six months he has to be out of work for a week or two and then he can apply all over again.

While we are helping these individuals in a way during those six-month periods, we are creating a chaotic situation for many of the families that we represent. The government has to put some sanity into the system. It either needs those workers on a full-time basis or it does not.

I know why the government is using casuals. Somehow casuals do not show up in the person-years. The government, in its wisdom, has decided on downsizing, thinking that by simply letting all employees go, the problem will go, not knowing that there is a tremendous amount of work out there that needs to be done and that management in the departments all across the land would have to look for manpower in order to do these jobs.

I do not understand why the government is proceeding with contracting out in a massive way without proper accountability, without proper analysis, hiring casuals left and right. I am not complaining about the fact that we should be hiring people, but never yet has the government taken the time to do a proper analysis to find out whether in fact we do have a surplus of public servants or whether we have a shortage.

Do we have a surplus or do we have a shortage? My view is that we have a shortage. If we did not have a shortage of public servants then we would not be hiring casuals and we would not be contracting out.

I am not against contracting out nor am I opposed to hiring casuals. But we need a proper assessment to see whether in fact what we are doing is the right thing, whether we are getting the return on the investment we are putting, yes or no. The challenge for the government is to do that particular assessment and that particular analysis.

Many of the amendments that my colleague from Ottawa West has introduced puts some sanity into the system. We have called on the government to create and establish a partnership with its workers. What we have seen is a walk out by the Public Service that the country, in its history, never saw before.

We call on the government to make a proper assessment so it would deal with question of promotion in the Public Service. There is no opportunity for public servants to get promotions. Look at the morale in the Public Service, look at the uncertainty in the Public Service. Look at all of those issues, and you come to one conclusion every time, we have a problem and it is that public servants have lost faith in their employer, the Treasury Board, the government as a whole.

To put sanity back into the system, an element of trust has to be created. We have to re-establish that partnership and go back to those who are building the infrastructure of this country, those who are providing service to the people, and seek their views and their opinions. They are telling us: "No, we are not happy with Bill C-26. It does not meet the purpose". The Minister of National Health and Welfare agrees with me because his department is one of those departments that needs every bit of help, as well as the immigration department.

• (1640)

We need sanity and this government does not seem to care. I know we are at the stage of no return because the government is stubborn. It is proceeding on it with or without the concurrence and approval of the public servants. The last call is to get out and speak with those who are affected, look at their concerns and address many of those amendments, which are all fair amendments and, if anything, will improve the system. None of these amendments was done in bad faith and none of them will create any kind of problem for the public servant, for the government itself, or for the people of Canada. Why do we not proceed with them?

**Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean):** Madam Speaker, I too am very pleased to stand here in the House and speak on Bill C-26, an act to amend the Public Service Employment Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act and other acts in relation to the Public Service of Canada.