

• (1810)

I certainly have a great deal of difficulty in understanding why we are proceeding with this legislation when the employees have said that it is not what they want. Surely, good employer-employee relations require making a much more serious effort to find out what it is the employees want and then proceed on that basis.

Two clauses in Bill C-45, Clause 5(3) and Clause 55(2), are being objected to. These two clauses would prohibit unions from referring to arbitration matters such as job classification, appointment, appraisal, promotion, demotion, transfer, lay-off and release of employees. These are matters which are really central to working conditions. I have great difficulty in understanding why they should be excluded from arbitration.

Federal public servants under the Public Service Staff Relations Board also face limitations as to what can and cannot be taken to arbitration. However, the Public Service Employment Act also gives federal public servants rights with regard to some of these issues, rights which are not contained in the Bill before us. Increasingly, what we are hearing from those who criticize the Bill is that it is almost word-for-word the Public Service Staff Relations Act minus the rights federal public servants enjoy by way of other legislation governing them.

A Conservative Member of Parliament from Ottawa stated in a radio interview recently that Bill C-45 is landmark legislation which provides Hill workers with important rights, including health and safety rights. That is not accurate. Under the Canada Labour Code, health and safety rights are already allowed. This is so as a result of Bill C-24, as my colleague, the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier), points out.

The workers on Parliament Hill have asked that Bill C-45 be delayed. They do not even want it to go to committee since that would bring it one step closer to enactment. The workers on the Hill know how our system operates. There have been many times in the House when Members on all sides have agreed to the principle of a Bill which has very large flaws and have wanted the Bill to go to committee, where amendments can be moved, so that it can be improved upon. The workers on the Hill are very familiar with this procedure. Yet what they are saying to us is: "We do not want it to go to committee. We want you to block it". This is really a serious situation.

Although negotiations with the union are being conducted by the administration of the House, every Member has a vested interest in this matter. While we are not empowered to negotiate, in a sense we are the employers of these people. If they are not happy with this Bill, then why on earth do we not just go back to the drawing-board and try to come up with something on which there can be agreement? I find it absolutely illogical and inconsistent with everything I stand for as a Member of Parliament to be involved in a discussion concerning a Bill which affects our own employees on the Hill and which they have told us they do not want. How did we ever get into this situation? Why on earth are the people concerned, the

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administration—and I still call them personnel people but I understand the term now is human resources—not talking with the employees, trying to obtain from them some sensible recommendation with respect to what should go into the legislation?

I am sure everyone would agree that the workers on the Hill are entitled to some type of staff association, a union, we can call it what we will. They are entitled to some type of arrangement by which they can bargain and which will allow them a say in the conditions of their work. Since everyone is agreed on that point, why on earth not take the next step and make more of an effort to ensure that what they are offered is what they want? After all, one of the points in having a union is so that there is an organized framework for the resolution of disputes and so that there can be fairer labour practices which benefit both worker and employer. If we start off with a situation in which workers say they do not want this, then surely we are starting off on the wrong foot.

Surely, there is no way of rescuing this legislation. I strongly suggest that the Government withdraw it and start some meaningful and time-limited negotiations with the employees in order to come up with something that is acceptable. After all, if people have something forced upon them, they will not use it productively. However, something which is agreed upon with good will between employer and employee is more likely to work and more likely to provide a sensible framework for the resolution of disputes.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Are there questions or comments? The Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy).

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson) what her impression is with respect to why this legislation, or similar legislation, was not brought forward by the Government of which she was a part prior to September of 1984. It is deeply regrettable that after so many years of knowing that the workers on the Hill wanted to join a union and wanted to have the right to negotiate that the previous Government did not act at all in that respect.

Miss Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is not correct in saying that the previous Government did not act at all in this respect. It was the Charter of Rights and Freedoms introduced by the previous Government which was the basis for broadening access to collective bargaining. In fact, we had draft legislation. Since it was not an area in which I was immediately involved, I cannot remember whether or not it was introduced in the House. However, there was certainly discussion with the workers on the Hill as a result of which I understand there was a fairly clear understanding that the way they wished to proceed was under the Canada Labour Code.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I am more than pleased to have listened to the remarks of my colleague, the Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson). Knowing her background, especially in social work, and knowing of her commitment to good