

*Public Service Performance*

morale of those who are working for us. Once in a while hon. members of this House, instead of shouting "no" to motions I make along that line, would do better to let some of those motions be put if they really mean what is being said by the government today that we want efficiency in the public service.

I have just one other suggestion to make, and that is that the President of the Treasury Board and the President of the Privy Council, or whoever with him will be responsible for it, do some very hard thinking about the amendments which are to come in this session to the Public Service Staff Relations Act. One way to get really efficient service and to achieve satisfaction on the part of those who work for us would be to make sure that the relations between the government as employer and our workers as employees are on the best possible basis. There are improvements which need to be made in the Public Service Staff Relations Act, and some of those improvements must be a lot better than a number of the suggestions contained in the report of the joint committee of the last session.

However, I wish to make the point that if we want an efficient public service of the kind suggested in the material tabled today, this is another of the areas in which we should be doing our best. So I plead for a new Public Service Staff Relations Act which would move in the direction of better relations between employer and employee instead of in the direction of tightening up and imposing restrictions and penalties and that sort of thing.

I sit down with the plea, again, that we do have a very good public service. Let us do all we can to encourage those who work for us and for the people of Canada.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse):** Mr. Speaker, I will be very brief. I wish to thank the minister for having sent us a copy of his statement and the paper which he tabled, a report that I will carefully examine. Anyhow, this control of performance, according to the minister's statement, will apply to 166,000 employees—quite a large number of people.

I am convinced that among so many public servants, there are various groups of persons whose working methods vary substantially. However what the government is trying to do, and we all hope it will be successful, is to obtain better efficiency from civil servants while treating them more humanely so that they enjoy their work better. When I had people under my orders I always felt that first I had to find their main qualities to assign them to a field where they would naturally do their best and enjoy their work better.

I am convinced, in spite of all precautions that may be taken, that the civil service harbours people who care a little less about the responsibilities related to their position and sometimes perform their work a little nonchalantly. Nobody likes to say these things because such practices are too general not widespread. I must say that I often call on officials Department of National Health and Welfare about family allowances or social security matters, and I have always obtained excellent cooperation. When I asked for information, I did get them very quickly. I give them credit for that,

because when we are in a hurry we are often prone to criticism. If we meet a person who wants to help us, who really wants to collaborate, we are happy about it and we should let it be known if we want to make a deserved criticism at some other time.

In any case, to help those who work in the civil service it is important to choose good directors, people who are able, when an employee does not give a satisfactory performance, to find out why. The department head should have a tactful discussion with the employee and try to understand what is wrong. We all have problems in our lives which interfere with our efficiency, therefore we should not expect others to do the impossible. They are entitled to a few shortcomings. A good chief, Mr. Speaker, must manage in a human manner, seek out the reasons for weaknesses, what stands in the way of good performance and try to help those who have devoted their working lives to the public service. We should not forget either that, in applying this system, we are dealing with people and not with machines.

In that regard, even if maximum efficiency is sought without compromising on quality, it must be recognized that we are dealing with human beings and not machines.

In conclusion, I would like to remind that whether we like it or not, civil servants are needed. They are responsible for the administration of what we enact here in this Parliament. There were some case where officials wanted to substitute for legislators, but that was rather accidental. However we often hear it said by the public that civil servants are the bosses, bureaucracy runs things. That may be true in some cases, but I would not generalize because that would be debasing us in this House. Parliament is the supreme authority. The executive, Cabinet is charged with implementing Parliament's will, with administering its enactments, and this is why there are civil servants. Each of us must meet his responsibilities. We as members of Parliament have an obligation to enact laws that are as clear as possible so that civil servants will require less time to prepare regulations under our enactments, regulations needed to implement the acts that must apply across the country.

Unfortunately, as I said before, regulations made under our enactments, even though with good intentions, are sometimes so far away from the act as to be unrecognizable, because they were made in a totally different frame of mind.

For this reason I suggest once more that regulations prepared under an act of Parliament be sent to us for referral to one of our standing committees, before final approval by Cabinet. It seems to me this should help ministers. Such a procedure will not take much more time, and members themselves could get familiar with the regulations and explain them to their constituents when the latter complain about something in the administering of our laws.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is my earnest and honest suggestion that this should be considered when we discuss procedures, in order that we become more efficient. This in turn would make for a much more efficient public service and a much better administration in every area, and at less cost.