

Majesty's Loyal Opposition. More recently, the Hon. Dick Bell, for many years national director of the Progressive Conservative Party and later a distinguished Minister in the Diefenbaker Cabinet, represented Ottawa West. Mr. Bell is still a leading figure of the legal community in the City of Ottawa and was a partner of that distinguished servant of the House, the late Hon. Walter Baker who I was proud to call my friend.

● (1700)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Daubney: I would be remiss if I did not mention as well my immediate predecessor as Member of Parliament for Ottawa West and yours, Mr. Speaker, as Speaker of the House, the Hon. Lloyd Francis, who was the only Liberal to have ever been elected in Ottawa West. I take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Francis upon his appointment as Ambassador to Portugal and wish both him and Mrs. Francis well in their important new duties.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Daubney: As all Hon. Members appreciate, it is always a pleasure to note a constituent's achievement.

I mentioned earlier that many of my constituents are public servants. I myself was a public servant for three years until my election. In fact, I was the only federal public servant elected to the Chamber on September 4. I am also proud to say that my great-grandfather was a public servant in this city in the late 1800s and the early years of this century. Indeed, one of the highlights of the election campaign for me on a personal level was encountering a constituent in his 90s who had worked with my great-grandfather in the Ottawa post office before World War I.

As the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has said on a number of occasions, we have a good Public Service in Canada. In most cases public servants are a dedicated, hard-working group of people who have oftentimes been the subject of abuse that might better have been directed in the past at their political masters. Public servants like all Canadians are people who care about their jobs, their families and their country. They are people with the education and the experience to make a valuable contribution to the public life of Canada, not just on the job but outside their work as well. In my view they are people who have the right to expect that they will be treated equally under the Constitution. This is why during the campaign I made a commitment to push for an extension of political rights and freedom of expression for public servants.

The Public Service Employment Act, enacted by the House in 1967, establishes some very restrictive and narrow rules on political activity by public servants. The Public Service Commission in February of this year issued guidelines on political activities which in my opinion went beyond the scope and intent of the Act in extending restrictions on such activities even further.

The Address—Mr. Daubney

[Translation]

I will therefore recommend to my colleagues that a special parliamentary committee be struck to draft a piece of legislation with the following objectives: first, to give political rights to public servants as recommended in the D'Avignon Commission report and, second, to indicate to all public servants in clear and precise terms to what extent they are allowed to participate in the political process, regardless of the category they fit in on the basis of the D'Avignon report.

[English]

I mentioned earlier that many of my constituents work in the high-tech industry. In fact, Ottawa West is home to several high-tech companies as well as to the Ontario Centre for Micro-electronics. Ottawa West has a large stake in the success of high technology industries. A good proportion of the new private sector jobs we need in Ottawa may come from these industries—from communications, laser, aerospace or other high level technologies, the same technology which other Canadian communities need if they are to prosper.

There is more at stake here than just the creation of new jobs in the high-tech sector itself. The fact is that Canada's economic health rests on the increased productivity of existing industries. To survive in the world we have to sell what we produce, and we can only do that by drastically increasing the productivity of our mature industries—the industries where there are jobs for more than just scientists and engineers.

I am talking about our forestry, agriculture, mining, petrochemical, textile, shoe, steel and automobile industries—the areas where there are large numbers of jobs at stake. The problem we face here is that we cannot match many of our Third World competitors in these areas in terms of wages. I am referring to countries such as Mexico, Taiwan or Brazil where the lessons of competitive international economics have been learned well, countries where labour-intensive industries are productive and thriving.

It is obvious that we cannot hope to compete internationally on the basis of labour costs. We can only compete, we can only keep our existing jobs and create new jobs if we can increase our productivity or if we can produce innovative products at a price people want. This means developing new technology, creating new high-tech industries and learning how to integrate new technology with our existing industries, to help us produce better products more cheaply than before in our existing industries. We should not think for a moment that only blue collar jobs are at stake here. We have all seen the vulnerability of the scientific and engineering community to staff cut-backs.

Because of the small investment required for equipment and high labour costs involved in office work, a number of U.S., Canadian, Japanese and Australian companies have already begun exporting data processing clerical work to Third World countries. Labour costs are less. These countries can acquire data processing technologies cheaply and they can produce high quality work. The concept of the offshore office has been born, and one more brick in the wall of our economic compla-