

*Government Orders*

The Public Service exists to serve Canadians by delivering to them the programs of the Government of Canada and to assist ministers in devising effective policies and programs necessary for the good government of Canada.

I am sure that members of all parties support the fundamental principles for renewal of the Public Service set out in the 1990 report entitled *Public Service 2000, The Renewal of the Public Service of Canada*.

Seldom in our history has a program of organizational change been undertaken of the scope and magnitude of PS 2000.

Bill C-26 would provide a necessary underpinning for many of the PS 2000 reforms. It is a valid and reasonable package of amendments which deserves, in my view, our support.

I trust that we can debate this measure in a constructive and non-partisan manner that will help build a better foundation for Canada's Public Service.

[Translation]

The legislation by which the Public Service is currently governed goes back 25 years, and a review was necessary. Over the years there have been several proposals to reform the Public Service. There was an exhaustive review of employer-employee relations by Jacob Finkelman, in the mid-seventies. We had the d'Avignon committee in 1977. There was the Lambert committee in 1979, and recently several Auditor General reports made reference to the need for reform.

• (1540)

In his latest report the Auditor General sounds very favourable to this initiative. In spite of some reservations about the accountability framework, I think he can easily be reassured on that.

[English]

In addition, members will be familiar with the 1990 report *Beneath the Veneer* which recommended that government should place more effort on achieving more equitable opportunities for employment in the Public Service.

The proposals of Bill C-26 reflect many of the recommendations made in these previous reports and, in

particular, proposals specifically addressing employment equity issues.

In my view, it is now time to get on with enacting the necessary legislative base to implement the PS 2000 reforms required for the renewal of the Public Service of Canada.

[Translation]

I think that we sometimes take for granted the role of national institution played by the Public Service of Canada, which represents the country as a whole and is represented in every region of the country. As a matter of fact, 67.5 per cent of its employees work outside the national capital region, all over the country and the world.

The Public Service also reflects the linguistic duality of Canada as well as how important justice and tolerance are for the Canadian people. Moreover, it is pivotal to our parliamentary democracy. There is even a body, the Public Service Commission, created by Parliament to ensure that appointments and promotions are non-partisan and to prevent both political and administrative patronage.

Canada is not the only country in the world where the need for renewal is recognized. Others have already started to improve their public service in an effort to enhance their national and international competitiveness. Australia for instance has just gone through the gigantic task of simplifying classification, thereby reducing the number of occupational groups. In Great-Britain, the Prime Minister has announced the implementation of the citizens' charter which will make it possible to establish standards of service and to make civil servants more accountable.

In Canada, the renewal process undertaken by the Quebec government results from the amendments to the legislation governing the Quebec civil service since 1983. A legislative committee of the Quebec National Assembly has recently set out to assess progress up to now, and this should give a boost to this renewal attempt based essentially on the same principles as PS 2000. As for British Columbia, it has embarked upon an initiative to provide the public with better quality services.