

Government Orders

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier) moved:

Motion No. 6.

That Bill C-34 be amended in Clause 15 by striking out lines 8 to 27 at page 6.

He said: Madam Speaker, this amendment concerns clause 15 of Bill C-34 on the government's plan which, I may add, is supported by the opposition. We think it is an excellent idea, and we will certainly support the establishment of this centre.

My amendment is almost one of a technical nature. I will not take use the time of the House to give all the reasons why I think it is time we were consistent and logical when formulating policies on hiring public servants.

Madam Speaker, my amendment stems from the fact that I see a big difference between giving a contract to a person and hiring that person, according to the merit principle, as a public servant, in a federal institution like this one.

In my view, clause 15 creates three classes of public servants. There are those who will be hired under clause 15(1) of Bill C-34, which refers to public servants who are subject to the Public Service Employment Act. The second category is those who will be hired under clause 15(2) and 15(3) of Bill C-34, and who will enjoy the same benefits as federal public servants hired under clause 15(1), because they are subject to the same legislation, the same pension benefits, fringe benefits, insurance plans, and so forth.

Those who are hired under clause 15(2) will have a different status. They will not be subject to the same strict selection system as most public servants are. There will be no competition, no evaluation and no selection according to the merit principle. The decision will be up to the director of the Centre, and Madam Speaker, this bothers me. It means that people hired under clause 15(2) will have rights and privileges but not the responsibilities and not the usual screening that takes place when public servants are hired.

However, those hired under clause 16, which is not before the House but which nevertheless has a considerable impact on this legislation, and I am referring to those hired on contract, will not have the same benefits as public servants. A real contract does not include the same social or fringe benefits a public servant usually receives when he is hired under the Public Service Employment Act and subject to the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

I asked our top public servant, Mr. Tellier, who is responsible for the Public Service in the Privy Council, to explain the difference and why, in Bill C-34, a distinction is made between a person hired without going through the usual procedure and what is provided under clause 15(2). Mr. Tellier's explanation was that apparently the policy would allow people to work at the Centre who were reluctant to enter the Public Service as such. That is the argument he made. In other words, a professor who does not wish to become a full-time member of the Public Service of Canada could have a contract with the Centre that would give him special status, as it were, because he is then entitled to the same benefits he would have as a public servant, but without being subject to the same hiring conditions. I find this double standard somewhat difficult to accept. If someone wants to enjoy the benefits of working for an organization, he should be willing to go through the usual screening process and meet the customary hiring conditions.

I have therefore suggested that this provision be deleted.

[*English*]

I move that the motion delete that double standard allowing certain people to work for the centre and be in receipt of the same conditions of employment as regular public servants. I do not think that it is proper.

I make a distinction, a fine one but an important one, between a contract for services and a contract of services. The operative words here are contract for services. That is a contract given to somebody for specific services in research, possibly, or in other fields. Somebody who has the expertise and knowledge can ask an employer for a sum of money to do work, that is, the services of that person are taken and, in exchange for sums of money, a report or a study is given.