

Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act

third party arbitration. We need a far higher standard from the Government in these varied ways. I call upon it to recognize that fact and to respond properly to the amending motion before us. I thank the House for the opportunity to join in the debate.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Hon. Member. I followed his remarks attentively, and I think he spoke sincerely. Today's judgment in the Federal Court came as a surprise to many of us. Nevertheless, we will have to await the reaction of the unions to see whether they will go to the Supreme Court of Canada with the matter.

My question concerns the right to strike of Hill employees. The Hon. Member knows that in the Bill before us the right to strike is not given to employees on the Hill. He also knows that employees through their unions have held fast to the right to withdraw services if they feel there is a conflict between the employer and the employees, and they want to make it public. We all know the origin of strikes; it was to inform the population at large that indeed there was a conflict between the employer and the employees. He also knows that our employees have referred to meaningful arbitration. I do not know whether I should expand upon what is meant by meaningful arbitration, but it would include classification standards, promotions, demotions, and all other matters concerning nominations and appointments.

I am referring to the general subject matter of arbitrating conflicts and disagreements, and I know that our employees may be flexible on this matter. My question is not an academic one; I want to know where the Hon. Member stands. What would he do if we gave the right to strike to employees on the Hill? If indeed a picket was set up to protest, object, or inform the public of a conflict, would the Hon. Member cross that picket line?

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): No, I would not.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, that is the second such answer I have had from that Party. Other members of that Party have said that given a crisis situation where Parliament had to sit and they had to represent their constituents, they would inform the striking employees and come here to do their duty as they were elected to do. The Hon. Member said that he would not cross a picket line; I accept that as an honest answer. I simply say to him that there is disagreement within his own Party. Perhaps they should have a meeting of the minds in the NDP to find out what they would do in the event that the right to strike was given to our employees. They are always preaching about what we should have done and did not do. However, when they are called upon to make a decision, sometimes they are divided, as they are on this issue. I would like them to put their heads together and come up with a definition of what is a designated employee and a definition of what is an essential service.

The point at hand is whether Parliament is an essential service. If it is, then it must sit and do what it was elected to

do, that is, pass laws. If we read today's judgment of the Federal Court, we find that the House of Commons is not an ordinary place. It is the place where constitutionally we must pass laws. If it is our obligation to be in the House to vote, then the Hon. Member had better tell his constituents what he stands for and why he was elected to the House. If the picket line stops him from doing his duty, then the Member will have to tell us why he cannot take his place in the House and do the things he should be doing that he was elected by his constituents to do.

● (1700)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This being the first hour under the new rules for Private Members' Business, may I call to the attention of Members the provisional Standing Order 55(3) which states as follows:

(3) When the business of Private Members is being considered, no Member shall speak for more than ten (10) minutes.

[Translation]

The Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) on a point of order.

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order because as you just said, this is a new rule for Private Members' Business under which we can rise and defend bills or motions that are of concern to us.

Mr. Speaker, I am rising to ask for directions as to the procedure to be followed. As you have noticed today in the Order Paper, there is a list of approximately 20 Private Members' bills, which were drawn by lot, as we say, and which—

[English]

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It seems to me that the Member's Bill has been called under Private Members' Business and any point of order taking place in this hour should be pertinent to this hour's debate on the Member's Bill and not on any other subject.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will allow the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) to speak on a point of order on the procedure.

[Translation]

Mr. Gauthier: Mr. Speaker, I am raising a serious point. I know this is during my hour of debate, but I would remind the Parliamentary Secretary it is a matter that has been of concern to Hon. Members, and the time to discuss it is Private Members' Hour.