

*Public Service Collective Bargaining*

collective bargaining legislation comes in it will cover all employees of the federal government. I exclude naturally the military, whom I do not consider employees but servants of the Crown who enlist for military service.

As a matter of fact, if we are to retain a good staff in the civil service we will have to give them the measure of dignity and independence to which they are entitled. The day is past when getting a government job is a plum. There was a time when people rushed into government jobs because there were not too many jobs in the private sector. But today there is tremendous competition for able personnel. The government has to compete in the labour market and it is not going to be able to compete effectively if persons who have become employees of the government know that they are going to be treated as second class citizens. If we want a good quality of public servants then we must see to it that they enjoy all the rights and privileges enjoyed by other workers.

I agree wholeheartedly with what both the Prime Minister and the hon. member for Carleton said about the high standard of the public service of this country. But I hope that we will never stop with the steps which are being taken as a result of the resolution introduced today by the Prime Minister. I hope that in due course we will not only be able to build up a highly qualified and highly skilled public service for the government of Canada but that we will be able to make the public service at all three levels of government a career into which young men and women will go upon graduation from university or some technical institute or high school.

I hope that the day will come when we will have reciprocal agreements between the federal and provincial governments and between both those levels of government and the municipalities, so that people trained in public administration will, if they so desire, be able to move from the municipal field to the provincial field to the federal field or vice-versa while at the same time retaining their pension rights, their seniority rights and their other privileges.

In this way, Mr. Chairman, we would build up in Canada a great reservoir of well-trained and highly-skilled public servants who could work at any level of government and who would have a measure of security and independence which is not always possible at the present time. Often-times now civil

servants begin to work at one level of government and when they get to a certain age cannot avail themselves of the opportunity to go to move another level of government because they would jeopardize their pension rights and they are beyond the age when they would want to do so.

Second, I would hope that when this legislation is brought before us it will give to the civil servants of Canada all the rights of collective bargaining as they relate to wages, hours and conditions of labour. I hope it will enable them to bargain collectively about methods of promotion, job classification and all of the things which are related to their conditions of employment. I hope the legislation will not restrict their right to strike. I am not clear about what the Prime Minister means about the right to strike being prescribed in certain circumstances.

I think we must remember this, Mr. Chairman. While none of us wants to see civil servants go on strike, the fact remains that in the last analysis the strike is the only effective weapon which workers have in the process of collective bargaining. If the employer, whether it be a government or a corporation, knows that the employee is debarred by legislation from exercising the right to strike, then, of course, the employer can drag his feet in the whole process of collective bargaining.

There may be a very few isolated categories in connection with which there ought to be some understanding that there will be no strikes, but I would make them very restricted indeed. I would not have any of them if I had my way, but if the government is going to have a few then there ought to be some *quid pro quo* to protect these people so that they are not taken advantage of. That would mean they would have to have some right of appeal to a fairly impartial body, not merely to an arbitration board with the Minister of Labour, appointing the chairman.

● (5:30 p.m.)

The reason I argue strongly for leaving employees with the right to strike is not that I want to see civil servants go on strike but because I believe that if the government bargains in good faith, and if the grievance procedures which are set up are effective, the question of strike is not likely to arise. I do not say it will never arise. I was associated with a government which introduced legislation to bring all civil servants and employees of the Crown under the terms of the Trade